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Contents

The Week 175

Editorials

Roosevelt and the Munitions Inquiry 178
Justice Stone on Corporation Lawyers 179
The Movies Go to War 180

General Articles

The Saar on the Auction Block ... Philippe Soupault 182
Seven Southern Poets ..... John Peale Bishop, Randall Jarrell, Manson Radford, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren and Kathryn Worth 184
Civil Liberties Under Roosevelt .. Jonathan Mitchell 186
The Blessed Profit System ..... Charles A. Beard 188
Radio Room: A Coming of Age ... T. R. Carskadon 190
Washington Notes ..... T. R. B. 191
Other People's Money ..... John T. Flynn 192
The Soviets Laugh ..... Otis Ferguson 193

Correspondence 193

Valley Forge ..... Stark Young 196

Books in Review

The Two Cromwells ..... Robert Morss Lovett 197
A Medical Matter ..... Henry Pratt Fairchild 198
One Being Musing Dozing ..... Edmund Wilson 198
The Art of the Orient ..... Isidor Schneider 198
Women of This Earth ..... Martha Gruening 199
Books in Brief 200
Saroyanesque ..... Edmund Beloin 201

The Week

THE State Department is earnestly trying to throw large buckets of cold water on the first reports that it was about to recommend an abandonment of America's rights as a neutral in case of war. Secretary Hull now says that these reports were unjustified, and warns against preliminary guesses about the Department's policy. The statements of the government's intention were based, it appears, only on the views of Mr. Charles Warren, who was Assistant Attorney General during the Great War. Mr. Warren, in an article in Foreign Affairs last spring, outlined his policy. He would abandon any and every right of the United States to the unrestricted use of the high seas during any war between maritime powers. If necessary in order to keep us out of the conflict, he would prohibit the use of Americans ships to carry munitions or other contraband, or keep American ships away from the war zone entirely, or forbid Americans to travel—except at their own risk—as passengers or crew on any ship traversing such zones, or prohibit Americans from aiding either belligerent in any way whatever. Mr. Hull now broadly hints that the restriction on our neutral rights which the State Department will probably favor is along the lines of President Roosevelt's message to the heads of fifty-four states shortly after he took office. The United States would not insist on maintenance of its neutral rights when such insistence contravened action against "an aggressor" taken by the League, or through some other international instrument such as the Kellogg-Briand Pact—provided, of course, that we agreed with the verdict.

IF THIS is all the administration has in mind, then the excitement of the past few days has been for nothing. Mr. Roosevelt's promise made eighteen months ago still stands, and all that is now proposed is to implement it with legislation. Such legislation would certainly be better than nothing, but as between the Roosevelt plan and the Warren plan, we believe the advantages of the latter are overwhelming. Realistic students of international affairs no longer have any faith in declarations of aggression and action under them—if, indeed, they ever had any. In any probable war the issues would be too confused, the distribution of blame too uneven, to make possible such clear-cut and simple decisions. The chances are that any major war would split the League itself, that each side would call the other the aggressor, and that the United States would again be subject to the danger of being involved that resulted so disastrously in 1917. The way to stay out of a war is to stay out, by announcing in advance that we will have nothing to do with it.

THE notion that we got into the Great War solely because of Germany's attacks on our shipping is of course far too simple to be true. There were other and tremendously powerful forces at work. The Nye Committee has performed a valuable public service in making public a cablegram from Walter Hines Page, then American Ambassador to the Court of St. James, sent to President Wilson one day after his second term as President had begun. Page reported that the French and British governments would probably be unable to maintain service on their borrowings made in the United States through J. P. Morgan and Company, and argued

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that suspension of purchases in the United States for the Allies would cause a panic here. "It is not improbable," Page said, "that the only way of maintaining our present preëminent trade position and averting a panic is by declaring war on Germany." He then painted a glowing picture of the trade benefits that would accrue to the United States from such a course. It is not necessary to assume that this cable was a decisive factor in causing this country to declare war on Germany one year later: Page had long been violently pro-Ally, and Wilson had a will of his own. It is obvious, however, that the simple question of America's rights on the high seas was not the sole cause of our entering the War. The Nye Committee is planning to study the whole question of our financial relationships with the Allies; and it could do no more useful service in the cause of peace.

THERE is no space in a brief editorial paragraph even to suggest the value of the monumental report of the National Resources Board. We hope, in the near future, to deal with it at greater length. Any attempt at national planning for a long period must necessarily be founded upon an inventory of resources and a policy both general and detailed regarding their use. The chief impression we derive from the publication of this report, however, is a sense of the differences between the tepid approval with which such a thing must be regarded in an economy like our own and the jubilation it would create in a socialized system. Under existing circumstances we can hope only that minor parts of its recommendations may slowly and painfully be put into effect through such islands of social administration as exist. We must fear, however, that the greater part of it will be blockaded by aggregations of private interest. Its practical value will be largely educational. This is the sort of thing that sadly needs to be done, but will hardly be done until our economy is geared to social purposes.

DURING the past week while the Nye Committee was wondering whether the Baruch-Johnson mobilization scheme was a project to head off the Committee's hearings, or at least prevent additional appropriations to continue the hearings, it brought out testimony on the following facts:

> That the government agreed to build the Old Hickory powder plant of the du Ponts at a cost of $85,000,000, plus a payment of $500,000 outright to the du Ponts, plus three percent of the cost of construction, plus 3.5 cents a pound on all the powder made there during the War.
>
> That the du Ponts held out so firmly for a favorable contract to operate Old Hickory after the government refused their first contract that Daniel Willard, head of the War Industries Board, urged the government for war reasons to force the du Ponts to go ahead and make powder and leave the question of payment to later arbitration or law suits.
>
> That a total of $133,000,000 was spent by the government in construction work for various du Pont plants, including Old Hickory.
>
> That arms exporters habitually followed "an old Chinese custom" of paying graft to Chinese officers on arms shipments to China.
>
> That the War Department encouraged the sales of war supplies to Japan and other countries on the ground that such sales brought back valuable information and kept the arms companies in business for future war needs.
>
> That the War Department has already prepared not only a plan of industrial mobilization but a program of laws to be passed, and a tentative one of those to be suspended, which is to be sprung on Congress and rushed through in toto in the confusion following a war declaration.

IN THESE days when the air is filled with suggestions for a new political party, and when the old alignments are visibly breaking up, unusual importance attaches to a recent meeting in St. Paul. The Midwest Legislative Conference of the Farmer-Labor Political Federation at that meeting passed a resolution urging existing third-party and progressive movements to issue an invitation for a representative convention to form a new national party. Among the groups that might logically be supposed to play an active part in such a convention are the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party, the Wisconsin Progressives, the Non-Partisan League and the Farmer-Labor Political Federation, both of North Dakota, the Farmer-Labor Progressive Association of South Dakota, the Farmer-Labor Party of Iowa and similar groups in many other states—including Michigan, Illinois, Montana, Washington and Oregon. Even in the Solid South, the rumblings of unrest are assuming a significant sharpness; in California there are more than three-quarters of a million voters who supported Upton Sinclair in the late election and are possible timber for a new political structure. The difficulties in the way of forming a new "third" party are admittedly great; but so are the problems by which the country is confronted.

CHARLES A. BEARD'S article on page 188 of this issue of The New Republic is capable of being interpreted in a number of ways. It is true that we have no generally agreed-upon definition of profit, and that the existing system is a complex of many different economic and political institutions. It is true that government, forced by popular movements, has decided in the past that certain types of property shall not be exploited for profit, and that more such decisions in the future may be made without disaster, or even without greatly upsetting the control of the economic class that is now dominant. Exaggerated fears of minor reforms have been needlessly entertained by business men. With all this we heartily agree. We do not believe, however, that the "profit system" is a wholly meaningless abstraction. Nor do we believe that it will vanish completely without a vigorous protest on the part of those who benefit most from it. The fact remains

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that the crucial decisions in the control of our economy are now made by the members of a small but powerful class, on the basis of their hope of profit and fear of loss, that this regime works badly for most of the rest of us, and that a shift to social motives and control would be as great a revolution as that in which the representatives of capitalism themselves supplanted the nobles, the churchmen and the monarchs who governed under feudalism.

THE Labor Relations Board has sustained its own findings in the Jennings case after the rehearing requested by the N.R.A. The issue, which has become a test case of the Newspaper Code, is now joined: Jennings must get his get his job back with The San Francisco Call-Bulletin, or the publishers must come into open court with their arguments that only the Newspaper Industrial Board can decide their labor cases—in substance, that Section 7a need not be too strenuously observed in their business—or the compliance machinery of the federal government must refuse to honor a finding of the Labor Board. The last may be the method chosen. Mr. Richberg's remarks to the Labor Board at the rehearing seemed to indicate some such possibility, for he referred casually to enforcement as something dependent upon "comity," upon the desire "to support and coöperate" between two branches of the government, not as a step required by law. The Board on its part indulged in some even more pointed inferences in its discussion of the question of jurisdiction. Mr. Richberg had argued that "good faith" ought to be kept with the publishers—by declining jurisdiction. "No question of breaking faith can be involved," the Board said, "unless, indeed, we are obliged to take account of *some extrinsic understanding not embodied in the documents.*" We are glad to see one of those occasional private understandings between government and business so summarily squelched.

ONCE again the American Legion, this time through its Atlanta Post No. 1, comes rushing to the defense of imperiled American institutions. The present enemy is Miss Jeannette Rankin, former Congresswoman who voted against the entrance of the United States into the World War, who has been "un-American" enough to occupy the recently created chair of "Peace" at Brenau College, Gainesville, Georgia. The Post has forwarded a set of resolutions to Dr. H. J. Pearce, president of Brenau College, regretting the appointment of Miss Rankin because she "has long been obnoxious to those persons who believe that this country should be prepared to maintain its position as a world power," and declaring that "it occurs to this Post that the unusual department thus created could only serve the propaganda purposes of those pacifists closely akin to Communists." All this is cut so completely from the usual American Legion cloth that it would be unworthy of comment were it not for the sane, dignified and courageous stand of Dr. Pearce and the spirited reply of Miss Rankin, who restated her determination to discuss the causes and costs of war. If the Atlanta Legionnaires thought they could turn Miss Rankin from her purpose they were most naïve. Having braved the ill will of a whole nation, it is not likely that she will be disturbed by empty flag waving and a few harsh words.

A RECENT dispatch from Madrid (thoughtfully buried on one of the last pages of The New York Times) reports that the Association of foreign banks in Spain, including the National City Bank of New York, has subscribed 100,000 pesetas to a national fund being raised to "reward" the armed forces that suppressed the recent rebellion. This follows a similar action in California, to "remember" the National Guardsmen who showed such bravery in the San Francisco general strike, and causes us to wonder if this procedure is not becoming an integral part of fascist tactics. In one respect, however, the Spanish attitude appears to be far more honest and realistic. In Madrid there is no talk, as in California, of giving the troops "presents" or "remembrances." Services rendered are to be paid for in hard cash. It is our suggestion that the California committee entrusted with the "remembering" fund adopt this direct—as well as old—Spanish custom. Mercenaries are mercenaries and should be treated as such.

ONE of the alleged functions of the League of Nations, the protection of the weak against the strong, is made possible by the rivalry between the Powers of Europe. It is to this rivalry that the King of Ethiopia appeals when he protests against the belligerent actions of Mussolini. The Ethiopians are serenely conscious of the fact that neither France nor Great Britain is likely to approve of Italy's encroachment on their domain, with its rich gold and platinum deposits. Mussolini's refusal to recognize the League's jurisdiction in this question is a tribute to the power of this same rivalry in international affairs. Will the League accept the Duce's dictum? Rome has been preparing public opinion for this *coup* for months past. The government-controlled Fascist press has cried loud warnings against the menace of Ethiopia's rapidly growing army—which, so Rome claims, forced Italy to station 250,000 men in its African colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland.

THE attack on Abyssinian soldiers by Italian troops on December 5 was only one of a long series of violations of the rights of the "oldest Christian nation in the world." In 1896 Colonel Baratieri invaded the Ethiopian city of Adowa but was forced to withdraw with serious losses. The result of this episode was a Franco-Italian-British treaty which pledged these Powers to recognize Ethiopian independence and saved the African kingdom from being swallowed by its Italian neighbor. But recent developments in Africa seem to have whetted Mus-

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solini's appetite. Last September Libya, Italy's North African possession, was extended by an Egyptian-British grant of land adjoining it in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. This cession was the result of an effort on the part of France and Italy, with the approval and support of Great Britain, to adjust their conflicting African claims. Negotiations to this end are still going on. France is willing to relinquish its territory in Tibesti in exchange for concessions in Morocco. Under these circumstances the Abyssinian monarch may find that he has crowed too soon. Mussolini may gain his purpose, the erection of a protectorate over the largest and most important part of Ethiopia, in exchange for recognition of claims that are closer to the heart of France. The great imperialists of Europe are again dividing the African continent.

IN HIS annual report, W. G. Campbell, chief of the Food and Drug Administration, reopens the battle for a new Food and Drugs Act. He recounts the disastrous fate of the measure at the last session, the endless rewriting, the deliberate introduction of a mass of vaguely similar bills whose only purpose was to confuse the situation and make unlikely the passage of any legislation at all. He puts his finger on the reality of the situation: "Trade opposition, with the congested congressional legislative program, was largely responsible for the failure." In this session, however, he is hopeful of getting a good bill.

A LITTLE instance of why such a bill is needed was given recently when Mr. Campbell issued a brief notice about two drugs, cinchophen and amidopyrine. Cinchophen is used widely in the South as a specific against malaria, and both drugs are often present in headache powders, patent pain-killing preparations and medicines for neuralgia and rheumatism. Cinchophen, according to Mr. Campbell, has been identified as the source of extensive and often fatal damage to the liver, and amidopyrine destroys the white corpuscles of the blood. Some manufacturers note the presence of these drugs on the labels of their products; others do not, and under the present Food and Drugs Act there is no way to compel them to do so. Mr. Campbell is, of course, free to warn the public and invite users of headache remedies to write to Washington and ask whether their particular brand is known to contain either drug. We invite Dr. Copeland to estimate how many will do so.

SPEAKING of Dr. Copeland is itself a reminder of the rumors that have been going round in the trade about the fate of his bill. It was withdrawn at the end of the last session and is being rewritten; the rumors report that it is being rewritten by Dr. Copeland's friend and business associate, Mr. Ole Salthe, the head of Copeland Service, Inc. Since this organization performs many services in the way of expensive advice—worth, we dare say, every penny it costs—to manufacturers of foods and drugs, the set-up does not make us hysterically enthusiastic about the protection consumers will get in the new version. We suspect the final upshot will find Mr. Campbell still inviting people to ask him whether their bread, meat and medicines are going to rot their livers or load their kidneys with arsenate of lead.

Roosevelt and the Munitions Inquiry

NO ONE who knows the history of the campaign to "take the profit out of war" could help being surprised by the President's sudden revival of this project in his widely publicized declaration, and by his turning it over for elaboration to men like Bernard M. Baruch, General Hugh S. Johnson, and General Douglas MacArthur. Fifteen years ago the proposal was made in substantially its present form, and after thorough examination and discussion was disapproved as a dangerous fake by progressives and radicals from the palest pink to the deepest red.

We need not go over this ground again except in the broadest outline, since no detailed proposal or, indeed, any proposal differing in essential respects from the original one, is yet before the nation. What is suggested is not to abolish the profit system during a war, but merely to prevent business from making more out of a war than it has made during a preceding period of peaceful years. This is to be accomplished by a combination of excess profits taxes and price-fixing. It was the expressed intention of the Wilson administration to achieve the same result by similar means during the last war, but the figures revealed by the Senate investigation prove how tragically short of the goal it came. In putting the measures into execution any government must deal with powerful financial interests that will be almost sure to gain their ends by confusion and delay. Complicated accounting questions are involved. Upon what investment is the percentage of profit to be reckoned? What about calling forth the production of the higher-cost concerns, and thus necessitating the payment of prices sure to yield a big profit to the more efficient? Were the profits of the test period really normal? Are costs being padded to conceal true profits? What about the profit on goods sold, not to the government but to the general public, the prices of which will have an almost irresistible tendency to rise because of scarcity?

If we are to keep private enterprise in war, no objection can be made to any effort to limit profits, however ineffectual it may prove to be, but the danger in a ballyhooed proposal of this kind is that it will, by convincing people that private industry is really being "drafted" for patriotic service, make possible the drafting of labor for service in war in-

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dustries, the decreeing of maximum wages by governmental authority, the suspension of collective bargaining and the outlawing of strikes. The practical result of any such program would be likely to be the virtual enslavement of labor while the owners of business ran along with at least somewhat more profit than usual.

That a shoddy proposal of this sort should be revived by Mr. Roosevelt at this precise moment clearly calls for some explanation. What relationship has it with the Senate investigation of the munitions makers? Perhaps the President was only trying to help the investigation along, or was attempting to show the public that he was just as shocked by the revelations as they were and was busy with remedial measures. But certain other facts must be borne in mind. The paltry $50,000 appropriation for the investigation is about exhausted, and the Committee cannot continue much longer without the authorization of new expenses by the Senate. Nor can it draft its recommendations. If the public gets the idea that enough has now been put on the record to stimulate the required action, and that the task of recommending this action can safely be left to Mr. Baruch, General Johnson and General MacArthur, Chief of Staff of the Army, under the President's instructions, the way will be made much easier for anyone who wants to stop the investigation or to defeat any proposals the Committee may have in mind.

Up to now the investigation has been busy chiefly with the dealings between American munitions makers and South American and European governments. We have seen how ministers of war, high army and navy officials, relatives of presidents and even presidents themselves have been bribed by American manufacturers. Has it occurred to the reader that so far nothing has been revealed about the relationships between these munitions makers and our own buyers of battleships, our own buyers of military and naval aircraft? It cannot possibly be that the Committee has not thought of investigating this. Can it be that the Committee has been investigating it? Stories have leaked out about Committee investigators ransacking the files of the Navy Department and the War Department and even of American shipbuilders. Can it be that some of the things that they have found will not bear the light? It is known that the War Department, the State Department and the Department of Commerce have more than once attempted to suppress revelations by the Committee on one pretext or another—the exposure of war secrets, the disturbance of friendly international relations and the usual run-of-the-mine inventions which can easily be brought forward when suppression is desired. Now, just as the investigation would seem to be on the verge of reaching some of our domestic munitions transactions, the President, out of a clear sky, takes the ball away from the Committee. We doubt if he would do so consciously to protect anyone who ought to be exposed, but he may have received advice from some of the military or naval men to whom he is close, and in any event the effect may be just as bad as if he were privy to the designs of the opponents of the investigation.

We should remember, too, that it is the immediate concern of the Committee, not to take the profit out of war while war is being waged, but to take the profit out of fomenting war in times of peace. One of the most prominent suggestions aimed at this end is nationalization of plants making arms, munitions and warships. Such a proposal is anathema to the army authorities, who have in the past fought tooth and nail against every effort to extend government manufacture in this direction. Many of these authorities are, of course, under the influence of the private interests concerned; others no doubt sincerely believe that it would upset the detailed plans for mobilization of industry which have been worked out. A board such as the President has named is almost certain to support the army's existing plans, and to produce a program intended to calm the public by making a pretense of limiting profit in wartime, while utterly ignoring the main burden of the Committee's revelations. If this is actually the result, it will make no difference how pure the President's motives may have been; he will in this instance as in so many others have hastily withdrawn when the hard implications of his well intentioned generalities began to be clear.

Justice Stone on Corporation Lawyers

AMIDST the serenity and detachment that grace the life of United States Supreme Court Justices, one of them has written a document that has the quality and importance of a state paper. It deals in part with high finance and with financial lawyers. On these subjects the writer, Justice Stone, is far and away one of the best informed judges in the country. This he owes to his experience at the bar in downtown New York, and his nearby observation post while dean of the Columbia Law School. His remarks, delivered at the dedication of the University of Michigan Law Quadrangle, are published in a conservative, technical periodical, The Harvard Law Review, a journal that keeps the bar informed of what is happening in its world.

Justice Stone opens with his recognition that "the towering edifice of business and industry . . . had become the dominating feature of the American social structure." He turns promptly to the class that has, depending on your own viewpoint, raised or sapped this edifice—the investment bankers and big executives. He notes that "what had seemed the impregnable fortress of a boasted civilization has developed unsuspected weaknesses. . . . " He believes that the biggest evil has been disregard of an elementary principle of the law. These are his words: "I venture to assert that when the history

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of the financial era which has just drawn to a close comes to be written, most of its mistakes and its major faults will be ascribed to the failure to observe the fiduciary principle, the precept as old as holy writ, that 'a man cannot serve two masters.'" Among the practitioners of this chief evil, some of whose activities have in recent years come before his court, are the following:

> . . . Those who serve nominally as trustees, but relieved, by clever legal devices, from the obligation to protect those whose interests they purport to represent, corporate officers and directors who award to themselves huge bonuses from corporate funds without the assent or even the knowledge of their stockholders, reorganization committees created to serve interests of others than those whose securities they control, financial institutions which in the infinite variety of their operations, consider only last, if at all, the interests of those whose funds they command. . . .

He is unable to relieve the lawyers of responsibility for such doings. "The loss and suffering inflicted on individuals," he continues, "the harm done to a social order founded upon business and dependent upon its integrity, are incalculable. . . . Such departures from the fiduciary principle do not usually occur without the active assistance of some member of our profession, and . . . their increasing recurrence would have been impossible but for the complaisance of a Bar. . . ."

What manner of lawyer is the man who guides the financiers? Justice Stone, who knows the legal emporiums of Wall Street, reports that "the successful lawyer of our day more often than not is the proprietor or general manager of a new type of factory, whose legal product is increasingly the result of mass-production methods." The power wielded by these law specialists is of the greatest. "The very conditions which have caused specialization, which have drawn so heavily upon the technical proficiency of the Bar, have likewise placed it in a position where the possibilities of its influence are almost beyond calculation. The intricacies of business organization are built upon a legal framework. . . . Without the constant advice and guidance of lawyers, business would come to an abrupt halt." He sums up the big financial lawyers thus:

> Steadily the best skill and capacity of the profession have been drawn into the . . . service of business and finance. At its best the changed system has brought to the command of the business world loyalty and a superb proficiency and technical skill. At its worst it has made the learned profession of an earlier day the obsequious servant of business, and tainted it with the morals and manners of the market place in its most anti-social manifestations. . . .

Justice Stone thinks the Bar in general can do much, and can be depended on to do much. But he thinks the principal dependence must be on the law schools. He also pays his respects to the bar associations, and to their "grievance committees," who, though he himself does not refer to it, have specialized on infractions by little lawyers, and let the big ones strictly alone. He refers to "the petty details of form and manners which have been so largely the subject of our codes of ethics. . . . Our canons of ethics for the most part are generalizations designed for an earlier era. However undesirable the practices condemned, they do not profoundly affect the social order outside our own group. We must not permit our attention to the relatively inconsequential to divert us from preparing to set appropriate standards for those who design the legal patterns for business practices of far more consequence to society than any with which our grievance committees have been preoccupied."

The Movies Go to War

THE APPEARANCE of several new war films suggests a point that has not had much attention, namely, muckraking in the movies. It is true that pictures, even more than other art forms, reflect the ruling ideals of their social system. But, in a loose sort of democracy such as ours, it is also true that they do so in a haphazard manner. Movie scripts are not written in the vaults of certain holding banks, all underground and sinister: they are written for sale to the public. The public, having been born with the tin spoon of rugged individualism in its mouth, usually clamors for what it ought to clamor for. But when it gets a perverted taste for something hardly favorable to the ruling interests, do the producers know any better? They do not, as a rule: they have been taught to make things they can sell for a tidy profit (for the owners), and they go ahead making them if they're able.

The Warner exposés ("Massacre," "Cabin in the Cotton," etc.) and such rare pieces as "British Agent," which was actually hospitable to the Russian Revolution, have already appeared to worry the black-and-white boys, who must have all their categories imperative. The radicalism of such pictures was isolated and safe, but still there: they were undeniable deviations. The new war pictures represent something else again, and go farther. Not, certainly, Laurence Stallings' "The First World War," which is as diffuse in its emphasis on stuffed shirts and as jingoistic in its treatment of "brave British lads" and the fearful Huns, as could be expected. And not Leon Garganof's French production, "The Battle," which is very well done melodrama, waving its flag incidentally but without shame. Where the muckraking comes is in the first film to capitalize on such munitions exposures as (notably) the several recent books, the article in Fortune and the Senate Report: "Dealers in Death," now playing at the Criterion Theatre, New York City. This picture was made, quite frankly, by a few independent movie people, and made solely for the purpose of selling it. It veers between an illustrated lecture on the international war profiteers and a carefully pieced together historical collection of war and other films. It sensationalizes, that is,

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the basic scandal of war profits, and works up through the mock peace treaties to the war that is brewing today, with new guns and new gases, planes, ships, and always profits. In deference to possible censorship (it gets a great deal by the censors as it is), it does not mention by name those behind the profit lines in this country: otherwise it minces no words. It is as true and effective a document as you could ask for.

But the question comes up: is it really dangerous from the point of view of war industries? The history of its production is rather strange, but informative. The makers (Messrs. Hershey, Shaff, Kusell) found immediately that shots of modern steel and munitions plants were not to be had under any pretext. And their first inquiries were followed almost immediately by a visit from Mystery Man number one, who wondered what the boys wanted film for, and hoped they would remember their old friends Bethlehem and U. S. Steel, to deal with them gently. The boys covered up. That night their new office was torn up; but the script of the film was elsewhere, nothing was taken. Who can know what to say of this? When the film had been made there came Mystery Man number two, with no definite connections, but hints that a Certain Organization would like to see the film, perhaps buy it. The organization had nothing to do with the movie industry. The boys said they were making the film for release. Not interested in chicken feed. The man wondered if they would call $50,000 chicken feed, and left. Mystery Man number three had somewhat the same proposition, and, like the other, he may have represented breakfast foods or he may have represented the steel interests, but he represented somebody.

But the important point is that, once the film was being shown around at private screenings, the mystery men saw it somehow and were suddenly satisfied to let the matter drop. The film was frank and denounced the steel and munitions people, but at the same time, the emotion it would arouse in the people was one of panic: a war is inevitable and terrible: the whole world is arming, and we must have protection. The munitions makers sell protection.

"Dealers in Death," therefore, is a muckraking film; but it is hardly an exception to the fundamental rule of support to the most powerful. ("War Is a Racket," which was slapped together in an attempt to beat "Dealers in Death" to the screen and shows it, hardly needs mention.) Where we get to the subject of subversive films in earnest, is in Walter Wanger's "The President Vanishes," which coats a strong pill with melodrama.

This picture shows a group of conspirators sitting around, plotting to get the country into a European war. The oil interests, the banking interests, the press, steel, munitions, an ex-justice, a crack lobbyist. In a war they can clean up a million a day, and what did the last war cost? A mere 50,000 dead. slogan: Remember the Maine was one; Make the World Safe was another. Something about Our National Honor now, perhaps? This is decided on: the publisher will put it in eight-column heads, the radio will gargle appropriately. They'll get speakers and the oil man knows something about this new national organization of Gray Shirts: if the boobs won't fall, they will be pushed. And how about Congress, can this be arranged? It apparently can. The only one not in the line-up is the President, who shortly turns out a very good fellow, almost the hero. He is against war but helpless, and will probably be impeached. The rest of the story turns about the supposed abduction of the President, the inevitable frenzy of the country, the return of the President in such a manner as to frame the Gray Shirts (they have been carrying on in great shape, beating up haranguers of the workers, objectors, everybody), and the presidential address to all good Americans—rather paternal, but ringing.

Whatever may be said for the story, which is at once naïve, oversimplified, and well carried out for all that, the basic line-up is shrewdly conceived. These forces, when they get to work, will not be headed off by any business of kidnaping: but they will be the forces at the bottom of the thing, and they will work in just about this way, ostensibly for God and actually for profits, with all this ballyhoo of press and radio and shirtings. According to most of the hard and fast rules we know about movie production, therefore, a picture getting after such sacred trumpery in earnest could not be made, or at least could not be shown to the nation. But according to the set-up of the picture industry, it can be made if there is a demand for it, and it has been made, and is getting a national release through Paramount no less, and it will be shown as widely as the box-office figures justify. Reports at present are that it is doing less business than was expected, but even at that it will prove a more healthy influence on the national susceptibility to war scares than any propaganda we have seen. If, as even this picture might suggest to the more cynical, any peacetime influence on the national susceptibility can be healthy enough to matter anyway.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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The Saar on the Auction Block

THE Saar agreement between Germany and France casts a new light on European diplomatic activity. Inevitably it carries with it not only consequences for the Saar and its inhabitants, but perhaps changes in the general political pattern of Europe. For the treaty indicates that the relations among France, Germany and the Vatican have profoundly altered in the past few weeks.

In contrast with the policy of the late Louis Barthou, the present French Foreign Minister, Pierre Laval, has dropped all interest in the fate of the Saar, acting, it would seem, on the assumption that the result of the plebiscite of January 13 is already a foregone conclusion: that Germany is certain to be the victor. By this decision and the treaty that ratifies it, he has abandoned to Hitler's mercy, save for the protection of a few vague and verbal guarantees, all the factions in the Saar—Jews, Catholics, Socialists, Communists—that hoped to maintain the status quo.

Bargains and Counter-bargains.—The cynical merchandising of the Saar between France and Germany cannot be explained simply on the basis of reciprocal advantages gained by each country, certainly not by such advantages as are publicly announced in the treaty. For instance, the sections of the agreement covering the repurchase of the mines by Germany and the exchange of French francs in circulation in the Saar are vague and incomplete. Necessarily they must contain secret clauses and probably quiet agreements about what is to be done in the future.

As another instance, the French General Staff, for military reasons, has insisted on a readjustment of the frontier between Saarguemines and Mettlach. It has demanded, and has no doubt now obtained, the consent of Germany to the cession of the strip between the present French frontier and the Saar River (a branch of the Moselle). No doubt the League of Nations when it comes to interpret the plebiscite will find that it is proper to cede this strip to France.

In commercial matters, there seems little doubt that French interests are now convinced that the present commercial treaty between France and Germany, expiring December 31, 1934, will be altered in favor of French exporters, or at the least renewed in its present form. Otherwise it is difficult to understand the apathy of French industry, which, in the Saar, is losing its sixth best customer. French exports to the Saar annually exceed 1,500,000,000 francs, and much of this trade will be lost once the territory leaves the French customs union for the German. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that for the past several months, in contrast with earlier years, French exports to Germany have exceeded German exports to France. And so far as the market for steel is concerned, the Comité des Forges already has agreements with German heavy industry that cover French exports of metallurgical products.

Another complicating commercial factor is England, formerly one of the best customers of many French industries, but now—as a result of currency difficulties and reciprocal penalty duties—almost closed to them. With the loss of Saar coal comes an opportunity to obtain tariff concessions from England in return for an agreement to buy British coal. If such a bargain can be struck, it will be a further benefit to the French, for Welsh coal is much superior to that of the Saar.

The Coin of Politics.—Despite the importance of the commercial question, perhaps the greatest significance of the Saar treaty lies in what it indicates about French domestic policy. It marks a sharp return to the older plan of rapprochement with Germany, a policy demanded by several conservative veterans' organizations. For some time these have been waging a steady struggle against the anti-Hitler position of the Socialists and Communists.

Unquestionably the Franco-Soviet accord was a source of grave uneasiness to the conservatives. When that one-time radical, Pierre Laval, succeeded Barthou as Foreign Minister, he set out at once to show the world that France was none too tightly tied by her Russian engagements. His agreements with Germany and talk of a Franco-German-Polish accord are flaming illustrations of the new policy. At the moment French diplomacy is going even further and working vigorously to obtain German reëntry to the League, apparently on the theory that France is publicly identified with Russia's entry and that this is coming more and more to be held against France in all anti-bolshevik circles, both in France and on the Continent generally.

Germany Changes Chips.—Hitler for some time has been trying to undo the isolation in which his earlier policies placed his country. This new orientation of Germany has fitted perfectly with the recent Saar policy, completely aside from the fact that a policy of terror had already failed in the Saar. The groups united in the Freiheits Front—Catholics, Socialists and Communists—had built up an organization and a sentiment that made the outcome of the January plebiscite problematical. At the same time the commander of the Reichswehr, General von Fritsch, had made it clear to Hitler that anything in the nature of a coup d'état to seize

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the territory and forestall the plebiscite was out of the question.

It was at this juncture that Hitler changed his program. Since then, isolation has been abandoned as a formal policy and Germany has attempted to revive a policy of agreement and negotiation. The German Ambassador at London, von Ribbentrop, has been negotiating for Germany's return to the League, while at home Hitler's personal friend, Rudolf Hess, has been conducting an extensive propaganda campaign to prepare the public mind for this step. In the meantime von Papen has been sent to Rome to negotiate about a concordat. He has, it seems, obtained a promise that the Catholic Church will remain effectively if not officially neutral in the Saar question in return for certain unpublished promises about the attitude of the German government toward the Catholic Church in Germany. On the day after the Saar agreement was signed, obviously as a symbol of the sincerity of his intentions, Hitler deposed from his post and expelled from the Nazi Party Helmuth Brückner, Governor of Silesia. Since Brückner was both one of Hitler's closest friends and the leader of the anti-Catholic movement, the meaning of the gesture was unmistakable.

For Value Not Received.—These new agreements, official and unofficial, between France and Germany have created profound discouragement and confusion in the Saar. By thoroughly discounting the results of the plebiscite in advance, the French have deserted all the advocates of the status quo in the Saar, Jews, Marxists and Catholics alike. Since the sole protection of the opposition is some vague promises of Hitler, this desertion is likely to falsify the plebiscite, for it will throw to the side of the Nazis all the timid and the undecided who necessarily will cast the determining vote between the two strongly organized groups. Only a few weeks ago France declared herself to be ready to send troops into the Saar to guarantee the integrity of the vote. Now, after her deal with Germany, everyone in the Saar is aware that she has announced her complete lack of interest in the fate of the territory and its inhabitants. A prompt demoralization of the anti-Hitler opposition has followed.

Fortunately, the action of Great Britain in offering her troops (along with those of Italy, Sweden and Holland) has somewhat revived the hopes and strength of the opposition. It has indicated that Great Britain, at least, is interested in assuring the freedom of the vote. The British decision has had a further consequence in the general European situation. It has indicated that Great Britain, or rather the Conservative Party—the decision was announced by Stanley Baldwin more or less over the head of his nominal chief Ramsay Macdonald—wishes to maintain the prestige of the League of Nations and does not intend that the Labor Party shall reap the benefit of being the sole support of the League, which has remained very popular in England.

What the Accountants Forgot.—For some time the realities of the Saar problem have been displaced by the play of rival interests of nations and churches. But the Saarlanders themselves are concerned with their own economic fate as well as with problems of nationality and religion. The Geneva negotiations have failed to consider that if the Saar is returned to Germany almost the last prosperous corner of Europe will be plunged into sudden economic misery.

Since 1925 the Saar has been incorporated into the French customs system, with the reciprocal provision that certain Saar products are admitted into Germany without duty or at a reduced tariff, and certain German products have the same advantages when entering the Saar. Although this privilege is limited by quota restrictions, it has placed the Saar in a particularly favorable industrial position: it is the only country in Europe that has at its disposal a market of one hundred million consumers. Unfortunately, however, the importation of coal into Germany and of metallurgical products into France is strictly limited.

Two principal factors have altered the economic situation of the Saar and will affect the territory profoundly if it is returned to Germany:

1. Changes in the European coal market: The quantity of coal that Germany now buys from the Saar would hardly suffice to maintain the activity of the mines for a single month, and reincorporation will not change this situation. Germany is already oversupplied with coal and has commercial arrangements with Great Britain and Belgium that do not permit her to cut coal-import quotas in order to make a market for Saar production. On the other hand, if the territory is returned to Germany and French trade has no customs advantages in the Saar, France will have every interest, because of the inferior quality of Saar coal, in buying coal from Great Britain and Belgium. And at the moment sales of Saar coal in France represent 40 percent of the total production.

2. The increase of Saar trade with France: In spite of the customs advantages that favor Saar exports to Germany equally with exports to France, Saar production has been unable since the depression to compete with German products within the Reich, whereas they have succeeded in creating a market in France. The total sale of Saar goods in France rose from 654,000,000 francs in 1920 to 1,285,000,000 francs in 1927, a fact that seems to show that France is the normal market of the Saar. Further, the precarious economic situation of Germany is well known in the Saar. It is realized by workers, manufacturers and business men alike that if the Saar reënters Germany, the present prosperity will be quickly transformed into commercial ruin and widespread unemployment.

Not in the Bill of Sale.—No measure, no treaty, has provided any safeguard against these brutal and

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people. Unemployment, almost in a single day, will attain, or perhaps surpass, the proportional level of unemployment in the German mines—which is in the neighborhood of 60 percent. Nor will the mere figures of unemployment tell the full story, for the cost of living, which in the Saar is between 30 and 50 percent lower than in Germany, will rise sharply to the German level.

But the Great Powers of Europe, occupied as they are with the maintenance of national, military and industrial interests, have little concern for the section of the Saar population that will really suffer. Nearly 80 percent of the Saarlanders are mine and factory workers. In this matter they have no representatives to defend them.

PHILIPPE SOUPAULT.

SEVEN SOUTHERN POETS

The anthology of Southern poets, published in this issue, was arranged and edited by Robert Penn Warren. Several members of the group have studied or taught at Vanderbilt University in Nashville and were contributors to The Fugitive, published in Nashville during the early 1920's. Some of them also contributed to the symposium, "I'll Take My Stand," a defense of the agrarian culture of the South.—THE EDITORS.

A Defense

I would not interdict
Unscrupulous passion.
But the cloud is not strict
In its shape as the sun
For a cloud cannot win
To a sun's discipline.

We have seen states
Scatter and saints go down.
The storm abates
Destruction goes on
And only the wind exults
In the storm's results.

I would ask of the proud
They protect their lust.
For lowering cloud
And rising dust,
These go. Our pain
Is great, but we remain.

Fools of the intellect
And the starved bone
Were content to erect
Their rage upon
These disasters of blood.
But can they carve in mud?

We bide this storm
In naked emptiness
And find no wandering warm
To the night's distress.
By the gleam of stable straw
I stone one thought as law.

JOHN PEALE BISHOP.

Zeno

The swallows' twisting southward-turning flock,
Whirling upon itself, above an empty house,
I turn from, in forgetfulness and indifference.

That short-haired man, wrapped in his sheet,
Who sat and watched the rafted wood
Blown sea-swept toward the Eleatic shore.
The sea-bird twisting to its rest—
Here, let us imagine, first devised
The formal antinomy of the world,
And set it out, satisfying, profound. . . .
The waters and the wing-hung gull
Still erred outside, and gulled his eyes.
The wind stuck colder than his cloak.

What wool can blanket you, what rotting stack
Play straw-house to the winter's siege?
The cold wind and her spotted snow
Ride brindled down one moment-lifted gaze;
This pool, air, or earth-engendered flame
Set in the coils of durance—ah, poor siblings!
Greedy be, treacherous, distrustful, you quick hostages—

Cold came the wind; the winter goddess by the sea,
The blued sea-nymphs, trembling, fleecy, were a-cold.
Headland, promontory, the white smooth-mantled line
Loomed seaward, awing, slow, those blind deities
He had beguiled—this distortion,
This patchwork, this bloody agglutination,
The creaking stasis, the memorial gape;
That glazed-over and livid face,
Its lashes lowered to shut out
The storm howling, puffed, venomous—
The poor exigency, the unlucky decline.

You too, beside the silent traveler,
Tracing his slow steps, giddy with sleep,
Over some winding and night-hidden track
Along the uncertain margin of the deep—
Pricked up with suet, the bright mistletoe,
And drenched with willfulness and pride,
A lizard under their chalked faces,
O God, with what a malicious eye—

But see, the people trotting through the snow
To take you in, the shepherd with his cheese.

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How apple-cheeked and warm the house
You drowse in—how easy now to disbelieve
That fanged inarticulate confusion—and see,
Once more, wide as the goat-herd's prongs, the horned
antinomy.

Passing confusedly and silently across the sky,
Peoples of the marshes, the gradual abyss,
They wander to some estuary, some consummation
Sunk to under the crumbling wave—
To die in the stormy night, to plummet
Insensate, icy; or, like the lost pilot,
To stare over the long reaches of the sea
And feel, still gnawing in your breast,
The invincible and treacherous resolution—
Or, weltering, smashed, strangling, cry out to see
The rocket's livid and streaming memorial.

RANDALL JARRELL.

First Dog

The howls of the first dog surmounting sight
Expunge the swallows to a fretful glow.
Hills sag and the sky's crushed flat and straight
On eyes unbound to practise childhood's slow

Summary of terror; reigning the queens
And fine ogres through a sleepless hour
Until freedom's blown hideously extreme
And sobbing shatters its own power.

Now most often they walk courteously
Knowing who are the sleepy and unafraid;
Allow, with the grace of exiled kings, that we
Shall be well pleased to watch the long night laid.

Thus they lie. For I have seen them all day
Assured in the sun and with the men have stood
Uneasy and perplexed how we should take
Any confidence in our brotherhood.

How should a child know hearing his grandfather
Tell of men and battle? How when they ran
One lay a long time dying quietly;
Sir, he has said, that was a gallant man.

MANSON RADFORD.

Painted Head

By dark severance the apparition head
Smiles from the air a capital on no
Column or a Platonic perhaps head
On a canvas sky depending from nothing;

Stirs up an old illusion of grandeur
By tickling the instinct of heads to be
Absolute and to try decapitation
And to play truant from the body bush;

But too happy and beautiful for those sorts
Of head (homekeeping heads are happiest)
Discovers maybe thirty unwidowed years
Of not dishonoring the faithful stem;

Is nameless and has authored for the evil
Historian headhunters neither book
Nor state and is therefore distinct from tart
Heads with crowns and guilty gallery heads;

So that the extravagant device of art
Unhousing by abstraction this once head
Was capital irony by a loving hand
That knew the no treason of a head like this;

Makes repentance in an unlovely head
For vinegar disparagement of flesh
Till, the hurt flesh recusing, the hard egg
Is shrunken to its own deathlike surface;

And an image thus: the body bears the head
(So hardly one they terribly are two)
Feeds and obeys and unto please what end?
Not to the glory of tyrant head but to

The increase of body. Beauty is of body.
The flesh contouring shallowly on a head
Is a rock-garden needing body's love
And best bodiness to colorify

The big blue birds sitting and sea-shell flats
And caves and on the iron acropolis
To spread the hyacinthine hair and rear
The olive garden for the nightingales.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM.

Sonnets at Christmas

I

This is our day, His hour of life draws near
Let me get ready from head to foot for it,
Most handily with eyes to pick the year
For small feed to reward my feathered wit;
Some men would see it an epiphany
At ease, at food or drink, others at chase,
Yet I, stung lassitude, with ecstasy
Unspent argue the season's difficult case
So: Man, dull critter of enormous head
What would he look at in the coiling sky?
Yet I must kneel again unto the Dead
While Christmas bells of paper white and red
Figured with boys and girls spilt from a sled,
Ring out the silence I am nourished by.

II

Ah Christ I love you, rings to the wild sky
And I must think a little of the past;
When I was ten I told a stinking lie
That got a black boy whipped, till now at last
The going years with an accurate glow
Reverse like balls englished upon green baize,
Let them return; let the round trumpets blow

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The ancient crackle of the Christ's deep gaze:
Deafened and blind, with senses yet unfound
Am I, untutored to the after-wit
Of knowledge, knowing a nightmare has no sound;
Therefore with idle hands and head I sit
In late December before the fire's daze
Punished by crimes of which I would be quit.

ALLEN TATE.

For a Friend Parting

Endure friend-parting yet, old soldier,
Scarred the heart, and wry; the wild plum,
Rock-rent, ax-bit, has known with the year bloom,
And tides, the neap and spring, bear faithfully.
Much you have done in honor, though wrathfully:
That, we supposed, was your doom.

O you who by the grove and shore walked
With us, the heart unbraced, yet unbetrayed,
Recall: the said, unsaid, though chaff the said
And backward blown. We saw above the lake
Tower the hawk, his wings the light take!
What answer to our dread?

Follow the defiles down. Forget not,
When journey-bated the nag, rusted the steel,
The horny clasp of hands your hands now seal;
And prayers of friends, ere this, kept powder dry.
Rough country of no birds, the tracks sly:
Thus faith has lived, we feel.

ROBERT PENN WARREN.

Annus Quintus

Now is the death within her bones
Impotent as she and small.
Yet softly as her stature gathers
Its bright momentum, reciprocal
Within the nurturing flesh
Her death grows strong and tall.

Deep in her bones is feeding
The dark dimensional parasite
Evening and morning while her body
Seeks still to circumscribe the night
Where shade intrinsic shall outreach
Her substance's conclusive height.

KATHRYN WORTH.

This series of brief poetry anthologies will be resumed in the near future. The specific nature of the new groups will be announced in an early issue.—THE EDITORS.

Civil Liberties Under Roosevelt

TWENTY-ONE organizations concerned with human rights met December 8 and 9 in Washington under the auspices of the American Civil Liberties Union. Never before have so many varied groups joined together for common action. More than three hundred delegates registered for the conference, and during most of the five sessions the meeting rooms were crowded to the walls with spectators.

Roger W. Baldwin stated the occasion for the meeting thus:

> In a search to the country, last spring, the President asked what liberties any citizens have lost through the New Deal. He invited response. This conference is one answer to his challenge. For the first time in American history, we, as a group of organizations directly concerned with liberty to carry on propaganda or to organize for self-protection, meet here in Washington to draft a program of bills for Congress.

Officials of a number of New Deal agencies appeared before the delegates, and answered, or refused to answer, the tumultuous questions directed at them. More useful were the reports of the delegates themselves. The reports came, most of them, first-hand from picket lines before factories in cities and small towns, and on mass-production farms in the countryside, and from scenes of Southern lynchings. As speaker after speaker told his or her story, it was clear that there is no form of Nazi suppression that has not, at least in scattered instances, been practised here. Even such supposedly distinctive Nazi institutions as protective arrest and barbed-wire concentration camps, it was pointed out, were faithfully reproduced in Georgia during the recent textile strike. The number of deaths in class disputes in this country, so far in 1934, was estimated by delegates at more than fifty, with more than two hundred seriously wounded, a record showing a blood lust not much inferior to that of the Nazis. Some of the delegates, fresh from encounters with police, deputy sheriffs, state troopers, militia, hired thugs, volunteer vigilantes, felt that Nazism could come with little change in American ways of acting and thinking, and, moreover, felt that it would come before long.

Against this, according to Baldwin's report, under the New Deal there have been greater rights and sympathy for aliens, the American Indians, the inhabitants of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands and our other colonies. The conference also applauded the fact that no publication has had the use of the mails denied it by Postmaster General Farley because of its opinions, and that no attempt has been made by the federal government to censor the radio. Baldwin burst into the first night's session to

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announce that the hotel where the meeting was held was refusing rooms to Negro delegates. With bad grace the hotel had agreed to serve Negroes in its restaurant. On the issue of rooms it would not give in. The conference was faced—as, with monotonous regularity, left-wing conferences in Washington have been for many years—with the problem of civil rights for a tenth of the American community in an immediate, practical form. The conference voiced its indignation and walked out of the hotel.

No one listening to the conference could have failed to be impressed, once again, with the paramount need for a drawing together of left-wing political groups and the organized labor movement. The blame for their present separation lies, of course, at the door of mutton-headed or corrupt A.F. of L. leadership. Every issue discussed there in Washington—with the possible exception of the American Indian—was primarily of interest to the workers, and properly part of a labor party's legislative program. At this moment, equivalent issues are being fought for by labor parties in England and France. The organizations that met in Washington are militant and extremely resourceful, but no amount of militancy and resourcefulness on their part can take the place of the four million union-labor votes that ought to be mobilized behind their demands.

The question of the formation of an American labor party was likewise called up by the presence, at the Washington meeting, of men like Powers Hapgood. Their presence was perhaps the most significant thing about the conference. Hapgood typifies a younger element in the A.F. of L. that, as the depression wears on, is gaining in influence. He is organizer for a union, the United Textile Workers, that visibly is becoming politically minded. Viewed from outside the A.F.of L., Matthew Woll, William Green and the other men trained under Gompers seem eternal, but they are not necessarily so, and when a change takes place, it may be unexpectedly thorough and rapid.

Hapgood came to the Washington meeting straight from serving a jail sentence, received for acting as leader of one of the flying squadrons of textile workers last September. He interrupted his speech to read out a telegram from his wife, Mary Donovan, who was on a picket line at Southbridge, Massachusetts. The telegram said in part: "Five strikers arrested today. Gene's store stoned. No singing or talking allowed on picket line." Briefly Hapgood explained that Gene's store was strike headquarters, and that, before this, the strikers had kept their spirits up by singing as they picketed.

During the sessions, Hapgood and his associates were steadily assailed by Communist delegates. A man who had observed left-wing meetings for twenty-five years told this correspondent: "There's one thing, and just one, that's important about this conference. Throughout, the Communists have exercised moral and intellectual leadership. It is the first time in this country, at a meeting of groups of varying allegiances, that this has happened." To the writer, this statement seems exaggerated. However, it is true that the Communists were at times warmly applauded by non-Communist delegates and that they influenced the proceedings at many points.

The nature of the present collaboration between Communists and other left-wing groups is portrayed with fair accuracy by the meeting's attempt to formulate amendments to the N.R.A.'s Section 7a. A committee, headed by Hapgood, drafted amendments outlawing company unions and safeguarding the right to strike. These were sharply challenged for the Communists by Max Bedacht. In one of the best speeches of the conference—witty, concise and forceful—Bedacht argued that the workers could expect nothing from Section 7a, amended or unamended. To suggest otherwise, he said, would be to mislead the workers. The pacificatory Baldwin promptly named a subcommittee to rewrite the Hapgood resolution during lunch-time. Several hours later the subcommittee reported back the Hapgood amendments unaltered, but—so that no worker might be fooled—with an added preamble reading: "The N.R.A. was conceived as, and has functioned as, an instrument for the oppression of the workers . . ." All was peace until John F. Finerty, associate counsel for Tom L. Mooney, objected that many honest men had had a hand in drafting Section 7a, that while it might have turned out in practice to be an instrument of oppression, it was not conceived as such. He moved the deletion of "conceived as" from the preamble. Hapgood strongly agreed. Bedacht strongly disagreed. Debate then raged for half an hour. The final vote was about two to one against Bedacht.

The meeting voted to instruct its continuation committee to press for legislation by the coming session of Congress guaranteeing "farm laborers and agricultural-industrial workers the right to bargain collectively, and to organize without interference by employers." Delegates agreed that organization of the rural proletariat, now dazzled by the Huey Longs and Father Coughlins, is of vital importance. On this, and on the questions concerning the unemployed, the continuation committee was instructed to coöperate with the Conference on Unemployment and Social Insurance, to be held in Washington next month.

A final word should be added about the speeches of Elisha Hanson, counsel for the American Newspaper Publishers' Association, and Daniel A. DeSouza of the Washington Newspaper Guild. Hanson, with the canary feathers of his recent victory in the N.R.A. over the Guild still sticking to his lips, spoke blandly of freedom and American ideals. DeSouza had none of Hanson's glibness, but his words had an angry candor that brought a flush to Hanson's face. The interesting part, however, was the bitterness towards Hanson, and the loyalty towards DeSouza, visibly displayed by the working reporters at the press table.

JONATHAN MITCHELL.

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The Blessed Profit System

AMONG the new spooks introduced into the discussion of American politics is "the profit system." Along with the Constitution, freedom of contract, private property and manifest destiny, the profit system is to be fought for and died for, now and evermore. President Roosevelt is strongly in favor of it. Raymond Moley is fearful lest it be disturbed. Members of the American Bankers' Association tremble at the thought that it may be upset by government "invasion of business." It is relied upon to set the wheels of industry in motion, recover prosperity and restore normality, sometime, for some reason not always clear. It is supposed to be the wonder worker, the miracle maker of the contemporary scene. It made us rich and happy in 1928. All it needs is a free rein to make us rich and happy again.

To judge by the words and genuflections of ladies and gentlemen engaged in exorcising this wonder-working spirit, the term profit system must mean something very definite. It is constantly used by practical persons, and they are the people who know what they are talking about. True, they do not stop to define it, but that is probably because they think that it is as definite as the term "water" or "gasoline."

If we turn, however, to the works of economists who have given most thought to the subject in its theoretical and realistic bearings, we find that the term is as elusive as moonshine. Frank H. Knight, whose writings on the theme entitle him to first rank as an authority, says flatly: "Perhaps no term or concept in economic discussion is used with a more bewildering variety of well established meanings than profit." After this disconcerting opening, Mr. Knight proceeds to give a number of usages that help to explain what various persons have thought they meant in speaking of profit. It is appropriate to catalogue some of them.

1. The total social income is divided among landlords, laborers and business or moneyed men, and the share of the last group is called profit.

2. Profit is the net return to the capitalist, over and above interest charges for the capital he employs—charges determined by the interest rate.

3. Profit is the net return to the capitalist over and above all operating and fixed charges, including that *portion* of the capital in the form of bonded debt bearing a fixed rate of interest.

4. Profit is the total income received by landlords and capitalists over and above the amount paid to laborers (Marxian).

5. Profit is the net return over and above operating outlays, interest charges and the wages of management, including the capitalist's own services, if any.

6. Profit is the reward for risk—the skill and passion for adventure, likely to end in ruin and requiring the possibility of great gains.

7. Profit may be "emphasized as the lure that induces business men to make improvements and is depicted as the temporary income as regards any particular improvement, one which is eliminated by competition."

8. Profit is the amount received for anything over and above the price paid for it.

Besides the noun substantive standing stark naked, there is a noun accompanied by some kind of prefix. So we encounter "monopoly profit," meaning gains resulting from special privilege, such as an exclusive patent or charter or corporate control over industries and resources. There is also "normal profit," which statisticians have been trying to run down through the jungle created by the Wigginses, Mitchells and Insulls of the modern age. Still more bewildering is "fair profit"—a concept that introduces slippery ethical notions into the whirl of economic speculations.

After leading Alice through this wonderland, Mr. Knight proceeds to set the wonderland in swift motion. He turns to the dynamics of economy, especially to the swift movement in every direction at the same time, known as the business cycle. What happens to profit, fair, normal or otherwise, then? Mr. Knight coldly remarks: "Changes in the general price level and in speculative conditions have more than once since the outbreak of the World War transferred a very considerable fraction of the national wealth out of one set of hands and into another, not merely without regard to desert or justice but in a way demoralizing to the motivation of normal economic life."

Finally there is "legitimate" profit. Economists do not bother much with this, for most of them are afflicted with statephobia. For many of them, perhaps a diminishing number, the state is a kind of evil, necessary no doubt to keep order and protect property, but still an evil. It is an irrational creature guilty of doing all sorts of irregular, abnormal, cataclysmic and unprofitable things. Yet, there it is—the state.

Yes, there is the state, a vast, shadowy Leviathan, with a history extending backward to the dawn of civilization—which Franklin Giddings once defined in private conversation as "the first successful getaway." Nobody seems to "understand" it or its role. Yet there it is—the state. It performs functions in the rise and development of culture, in which economy functions. It has something to do with operations from which profit, however defined, arises and is garnered by somebody. Clearly, it has. Even anarchists admit it,

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though they do not like it; and economists are not anarchists—not quite, although some of them talk like anarchists.

Indisputable is the fact that the state, in its forms and practices, bears a relation to property, tangible and intangible, out of operations in which profit arises, for somebody. Yea, verily. This Leviathan, the state, defines property; that is, it specifies the things that are to be "legitimately" treated as objects of property—objects of manipulation for profit. And having specified the things that may be treated as private property, the state defends the "legitimate" possessors of such property against criminals and against persons who try to get it by "illegitimate" means.

Constantly the state is confronted with the question: What shall be public property and what shall be private property subject to servitudes such as "excess-profit" levies and other types of taxes? Bewildering question, this. More difficult to answer than the easy question: What is the profit system? More difficult, because the state is driven by other forces than the passionate pursuit of profit. It is a curious thing, this state. It is irrational or unrational. Men and women will die for it, without any hope of profit at all. Policemen and firemen will die for it, with no drums beating or flags flying, just trying to protect property, public and private, against criminals and fires. Disconcerting that it should be so, but it is so.

And, to make matters worse, the state changes its "mind" from age to age. Once in the United States, it provided that Negroes, mulattoes, quadroons, and octoroons were proper objects of private property in the commonwealths so deciding. These chattels were bought and sold at a "profit." In combination with land and tools they were "operated" at a profit, when, as and if. This profit was a net income for risk or anything else an economist wished to call it. It was a "legitimate" profit. Possessors of this form of property attracted by the lure of profit or J. B. Clark's lure of change were protected by the state. If one of the operating chattels ran away, all the power of the United States government could be invoked to return it to the "legitimate" owner. Great, good and wise men and women thought it fair, normal and indeed helpful to the colored race—so benighted in Africa without the advantages of Christian civilization, etc.

Now it happened that all sorts of queer persons got it into their heads that slavery was not a moral business and therefore should not be "legitimate." Most of these persons, for some strange reason, were in the North, where no profit could be made out of slavery; but there were many in the South, as Northern historians are prone to forget, including the Grimké sisters, who are generally overlooked by historians also. Anyway, the moral notion got about that this form of property used for "normal" and "legitimate" profit "ought" to be abrogated. The word "ought" of course made practical persons mad, for they were concerned with "things as they are" and with research in things as they are. But still the notion spread, and in the course of human events a practical politician, known as A. Lincoln, who was elected on pledges that this form of property would be forever protected in American states where it was legitimate, got the notion into his head. When operators in this line of profit making came into collision, rather violent collision, with the government of the United States, A. Lincoln found ample power in the Constitution for abolishing in many places this form of property used legitimately to make "profit." Later the whole business became "illegitimate."

In the light of the state's long and checkered career, persons acquainted with the Leviathan's history hesitate to say categorically what will happen and what ought to happen. Still a few conjectures may be hazarded.

The objects of property available for profit making are changing in legal definition. For example, a number of practical persons, both Democrats and Republicans, are agreed that water-power sites owned by the state and federal governments shall not become objects of private property, as in the past, but shall be retained as public property. Some of these practical persons hold that this public power should be developed through state agencies and sold directly to consumers. Others believe that it should be leased to private concerns on terms and conditions that yield only a fair return on actual or prudent investment. In one sense of the variegated term, this means no "profit" at all, just a return over and above operating costs that will attract capital and skilled managerial enterprise into the industry. Again, all forms of private property "affected with public interest" are subject to regulation by the state, with a view to preventing "exorbitant profits." Then N.R.A., A.A.A. and P.W.A. are operated on the assumption that there are such things as "fair" profits and "legitimate" profits.

The tale could be drawn out to any length by reference to statutes, judicial decision, constitutions, executive orders, commission decrees and industrial codes. Some day, when "scientific research" is touched by amusement and irony, the tale will be told in many volumes. But enough hints are given above to indicate that the thrice-blessed words "profit system," like the blessed word Mesopotamia, do not exactly describe anything that intelligent persons should fight and die over. On the contrary, it would seem that each political and economic prestidigitator who thrusts this spook into our affrighted gaze should get down to brass tacks and tell us *just what he means* when he performs the miracle.

Of course this would take much of the fun and heat out of party politics, because when men and women say concretely just what they want, the

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sharp lines between black and white, kettle and pot, tend to disappear. In such circumstances discussion can proceed rationally with reference to facts. In view of the huge number of people who aren't getting any wages, to say nothing of "profits," and the small number who are actually getting profits, it would seem the better part of wisdom not to have an immediate line up, knock down and drag out, on that issue in the higher verbalism. But since reason and facts are so generally discredited among the scholastics of practical politics, there is danger that they will not be sufficiently considered. Still, we never can tell. That is one of the "lessons" of history.

CHARLES A. BEARD.

Radio Room: A Coming of Age

LIMOUSINES roll up to Rockefeller Center. Murmurous groups of befurred and bejeweled ladies, handsome and courtly gentlemen, respectful camp followers, debouch and enter. They are hand-picked guests, bidden to an exhibition that marks a signal advance in the long, slow wedding of art and industry. This is radio. Elsie De Wolfe, Stair and Andrew, L. Alavoine, Contempora and French and Company have designed rooms to accommodate radio receiving sets.

Surely you get the idea. Why build a music room around such stuffy, old-fashioned, manually operated instruments as pianos, harps or residence organs? The wonders of the world are yours for the flick of a dial. This is the art that encompasses all the arts, the center of interest of the modern home, the culture font of today. Give it a room of its own. Give us a room fit to receive the heavenly harmonies of Mr. George Gershwin as he lifts his keyboard to the greater sales of Feen-A-Mint. Grant us a shrine for the Swanee music of Miss Kate Smith, a cloistered nook for the elfin humors of Mr. Lou Holtz. These are the core of our current culture; give radio a room of its own.

Stair and Andrew have replied with a mellow cubicle paneled in Georgian English pine; L. Alavoine and Company offer the tapestried splendors of continental France; Contempora spreads the broad, swift mood of Today; French and Company revive the gilt and crystal elegance of the last of the Louises; and Elsie De Wolfe brings forth a cabaña lounge out of Long Island, by Hollywood. These are the rooms, set up in all their splendor in the mezzanine gallery of Rockefeller Center for the public to see and absorb, and this is the opening reception.

Great swarms of ladies, of men; warmth, perfume, smoke, cocktails, sandwiches, coats, orchids and talk. Park Avenue and all that. One hears a matron chiding, "My dear, have you any idea of what it *costs* to have a room done by Alavoine?"

First on the right is the octagonal room by Stair and Andrew. Here is waxed pine, period of 1760, removed intact from some old English house and brought overseas to impanel an American radio room. An original Reynolds hangs on the wall, under it is a sofa designed by the brothers Adam. Here our modern squire—if not to the manor born, at least to the moneybags inheritant—may sit at ease before his radio. He may reach overhead for fine, calf-bound volumes of Britain's solid John Locke, or that skeptic Scotsman, Master David Hume. These he will thumb idly, not chancing to read, lest he impair the savor of the poetry of Edgar Guest, or befog the distillate wisdom of the Voice of Experience.

Across the corridor now, and down to what is known as a *dropt* radio room by Contempora, Inc. The broad sweep of the modern mood is set forth in this, the largest of the five rooms. It is now become, by grace of size, the central meeting place of most of the guests. Here is "plastic treatment of enclosed space" by Paul Wiener; here are sculptures by Archipenko and Sardeau, knickknacks by Rena Rosenthal; here is a dramatic, white-carpeted dais leading up to the instrument that brings the message of intestinal fermentation, of yeast cakes and Rudy Vallée.

A débutante whispers, "Have you seen the bar?" and drags her escort across the corridor. We follow. So this is what Elsie De Wolfe's cabaña lounge turns out to be. A home barroom set up to face a swimming pool, beach, lake, river—or is there a drought this summer? The angled bar terminates in mirrors (more fun for the drunks!) and the room, all gay in green and white, is a-glitter with glass and tile and sailcloth for dripping cocktail glasses and dripping bathers' bottoms. How that name, Elsie De Wolfe, does impress the beholders! No, don't tell me. I know. Elsie De Wolfe is Lady Mendl! Her Ladyship has one choice conceit. Tucked away at the end of a sailcloth divan is an object whose flat top might be useful for receiving empty glasses, ashtrays, bathing caps or other odd items. It is a radio set.

Through the mob again, to the cool elegance of the room by Alavoine. A Louis XVI carved marble mantel; Aubusson tapestry; Genoa velvet; needlepoint lace; French prints; Grimoux painting—ah, to be in Paris in the springtime, listening to the radio! A suspicion arises, and is confirmed. The radio set in each room is exactly the same model. An accommodating wench, this radio! The model is Philco's No. 509X, a limited-edition, custom-built "job" combining an automatic record-changing phonograph with an all-wave, all-purpose, high-fidelity radio bringing you (with high fidelity) everything from Bi-So-Dol's "Broadway Varieties" to Lysol's "Hall of Fame."

The fifth room, by French and Company, shows rare painted panels, golden furniture and heirlooms from France. A connoisseur's room, truly. At its center is a lovely, ancient spinet, the very type of instrument at which the craglike Bach sat composing his "Exercises for the Well Tempered Clavi-

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chord." The decorative young lady in charge of this room spots an eminent artist, an acquaintance whose honest opinion she importunes. "To do a room like this must cost at least ten thousand dollars," he says, after an appraising look around. "If I had the money for decoration on any such scale, do you know what I would do?" he asks. The young lady looks at him inquiringly. "I'd throw out that damned radio!"

T. R. CARSKADON.

Washington Notes

Battle of the Session: The 30-Hour Week Bill—Apostle Alfred P. Sloan—Senators on the Spot

THE "Corps of Correspondents," busily engaged in forecasting the controversial issues to come before the next Congress, seem to me to minimize, and in some cases to ignore, what clearly will be the most bitterly contested issue of all—that of the thirty-hour-week bill. They do this neither from design nor ignorance, but largely because other questions have been forced to the front by the administration. Nevertheless, those who fully appreciate the situation look upon the inevitable clash between capital and labor on this bill as the real battle of the session.

The question involved is basic and the difference between the two sides irreconcilable. That the manufacturers are planning to concentrate every ounce of energy and use every resource they have to kill this proposal is evidenced in a number of ways. The most recent example came in the form of a speech from Mr. Alfred P. Sloan, president of General Motors and one of the business leaders with whom the White House has been in touch. Mr. Sloan, in Chicago, asserted that the "spell" of a planned economy and regimentation had been broken. He said he regarded this as the greatest evidence of advance during the year and then laid down his prescription for progress during the coming year. At the top of his list was this, "Increased hours of employment and increased productivity." Two other slogans for the New Year enunciated by Mr. Sloan were "A flexible wage scale" and "A free worker as opposed to the closed shop." It is entirely clear that in these matters Mr. Sloan speaks for the whole employer class, and the principles he thus pronounced can be accepted as the authoritative employer's creed.

There is nothing surprising or even new in this. On the contrary, this is the manufacturers' natural point of view and one can count upon their being united behind these principles and against any legislative proposals that clash with them. The really interesting thing about Mr. Sloan's speech is not whether the employers will be solidly against the thirty-hour-week bill, because that goes without saying, but whether the administration, which is the collective name used for Mr. Roosevelt, is going to stand with the employers. The overwhelming conviction is that it will be against the bill. Mr. Roosevelt has avoided making any commitment in either direction, but administration spokesmen supposed to reflect his views have not been silent. For instance, Mr. Donald Richberg has taken a rather flat attitude of opposition to legislation fixing a definite labor limit, and in this attitude such presidential advisers as Dr. Moley and others of the conservative wing are understood to be in complete accord. In addition, the President's personal feeling, I think, is definitely hostile to the proposed law and he feels that labor ought to trust him in this respect and not force his hand.

Notwithstanding all this, the forces back of the bill are so strong and the sentiment in its favor in Congress so pronounced that its passage will only be prevented, I think, by the exercise of political force. It seems certain now that this will be used unless there is a weakening in Mr. Roosevelt's present determination to stand by those members of his administration who contend that American industry cannot be standardized with a uniform work week. The last time agitation for a statutory limitation on work hours reached anything like its present proportions Mr. Roosevelt sidetracked the whole movement by miraculously producing the N.R.A. experiment. This, it was argued, would cover the same ground as the Black-Connery bill and labor could leave it to the N.R.A. to work out the problem. Labor did. The Black-Connery bill was dropped and the hopes of the labor leaders were pinned upon Section 7a.

The collapse of the N.R.A. after a year and a half of confused and futile existence brings this question of work-hour limitation once again to the fore. Labor leaders feel that they lost an opportunity when they permitted themselves to be persuaded to drop the Black-Connery bill in 1933. They are determined not to compromise or recede at this session. They may be, and probably will be, licked, because the weight of the administration is very great indeed. But they will not again fall for any alternative proposition. At least, this is what they say at the moment. What they will say after the President has turned the full force of his beguiling smile upon them and once more explained how ardently his heart beats for human rights as against property rights, no one can foretell.

My conviction at the moment is that Mr. Roosevelt will do all he can to keep labor from pushing the thirty-hour-week bill to the limit. In this he will be unsuccessful. His effort then will be to use his prestige and power to pull support away from it in the House and Senate. He will not succeed in the House and in the Senate will have only partial success. In the end, he will have to exert the full political power of the administration to beat the bill—if it is to be beaten. Right now he is being advised by those closest to him that his whole recovery program would be thrown out of balance were a general thirty-hour-week law adopted.

It is worth recalling that on April 6, 1933, the Senate passed the bill by a vote of 53 to 30. No one doubted at the time that it would have passed the House but for the springing of the N.R.A. This is enough to show that Mr. Roosevelt and the employers will have a real fight to beat the bill this time—if it is pushed. Beyond doubt the intention to push it to the limit exists among the labor leaders. From Mr. William Green down, they are on record to this effect. Their idea is that this time they will not be diverted by any alleged forward passes, that everybody is going to be

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forced to show his colors and that the game will be played to the finish.

Before the whistle blows a number of senatorial gentlemen who have been playing both ends against the middle with considerable success for a considerable time, are going to be put on the spot. The more far-sighted among them appreciate the risks and are doing all they can in advance to ensure against damage. If they can, they want to avoid the final vote, but if that comes and they have to choose between standing by the President on one side and the A.F. of L. on the other, most of them will stand by the latter on the same theory that led them last year to desert the President and vote with the veterans. The theory, in a nutshell, is that the risk in the next election will be less.

T.R. B.

Washington.

Other People's Money

Out of the Hides of Babes—A Herring for an Inquiry—Mr. Moffett's Sky Ride—The General Returns

HARRY L. HOPKINS, Relief Administrator, said recently that the "costs of the depression are being taken out of the hides of children." This statement is based on the fact that out of 12,945,000 persons receiving relief in October, 1933, 5,250,000 were children. But there is another aspect of this that is worth noting. It is that the bills for the relief of these children and their parents are being sent to the children. Last week the government borrowed $992,000,000 to be used in relief work. The bonds on which this sum was raised are payable in 1954. The children of 1934 will be the taxpayers of 1954, and so they or their great-great-grandchildren are expected, in 1954 or thereafter, to pay for the depression of 1929 to 1934 *et seq.* Since 1930 we have borrowed $11,000,000,000 to support the depression. This vast sum we are going to ask our children and grandchildren to pay, along with the billions we borrowed under Coolidge to build our roads, our palatial apartment houses, our movie cathedrals. Is it not time to consider calling on the men who usurped too large a share of the income of the American people under Coolidge to pay the bills of the depression they produced?

Wall Street is getting on to the President. It registered its appraisal of his Take-the-Profits-Out-of-War act the day the announcement was made. The munitions stocks did not budge save in unison with the entire market, which was practically motionless. One chemical stock actually went up a point. The President's plan, of course, has no relation whatever to the subject of the Senate investigation. The chief topic there has been not the profits of war during wartime, but the profits of war during peacetime, the racket of loading nations with armaments during periods of profound tranquility and stirring up animosities, alarms, rumors, in order to stimulate the sale of arms. Here is a mere suggestion: When the arms inquiry is over you will then begin to understand why this red herring has been drawn across its trail.

It is really time someone drew Mr. Moffett aside and put a cool, wet towel on his fevered brow. His own publicity department has evidently intoxicated him. He flings about stories of millions, hundreds of millions, as if they were nothing. Mr. Moffett, whose job is to administer the federal law to stimulate modernization and repairs to houses and to attempt to organize a lively mortgage market to get new houses built by private industry, has spent to date $1,300,000 on publicity. What he has accomplished must be measured by the number of repair and modernization loans that have been made, and the number of houses that have been built, as a result of his work.

The results, of course, have been extremely modest. But if you read one of Mr. Moffett's speeches or statements you find yourself floating aloft on staggering arrays of figures, rising from millions to tens of millions, to hundreds of millions, to billions, all of which mean absolutely nothing. But, if you can follow it, Mr. Moffett's tangled web of figures makes an interesting study in auto-intoxication.

In the matter of new houses built, the record is a big zero. He has hardly got around to that yet. He has just said his new home-construction program cannot get under way immediately. That's that. As for repair loans, he announces that up to December 10 the total made was $25,350,000. Since his department has been at work since Congress adjourned, and has been propagandizing for at least eighteen weeks, this means a record of $1,400,000 a week, which may be called a flea bite on the capital-goods industry. And, moreover, there is nothing to show that a good part of these loans would not have been made without Mr. Moffett.

Then the administrator begins to take off. He has distributed 52,000,000 pieces of literature and has "generated $145,000,000 of new business." Improvements and repairs will equal a billion and a half by this time next year. And then—the pilot is now high in the clouds—he sees a half-billion to be spent by industry and "I am not so sure we won't have a billion by Christmas" (this Christmas, mind you).

These figures are easily arrived at. Applications for home-mortgage insurance to the extent of $145,000,000 have been received. Alas, the P.W.A. can tell him the difference between an application and a loan. And as for the billion, of course that is utterly beyond the pale and jurisdiction of Mr. Moffett's housing administration. He has included a threat by the A. T. & T. to spend $200,000,000 this winter, and a few other threats. The simple truth is that to date the effort to generate recovery by means of repairs of old houses and the building of new houses by private industry has proved a complete dud. Why not recognize it and put an end to Mr. Moffett's "statistics" getting in the way of a real government housing program?

A doleful sound comes from another New Deal gadget. It is the industrial loan law, which was passed by Congress at the behest of the President and Mr. Jesse Jones to punish the wicked bankers for their treason in refusing to lend to industry. The law has been in force for five months. And to date the Federal Reserve has approved 857 applications for loans totaling $42,000,000, which means about $2,000,000 a week. If the President does not quit soon, the depression will be just one mass of flea bites.

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It is good to see General Johnson back in the picture. The Times suggests that his recall to collaborate in taking the profits out of war is "the Roosevelt touch." It is indeed. The General will now give us another exhibition of "co-operation" with the President, the Senate, Congress, the Cabinet, industry and the world. It will also take his mind off his memoirs. Have you thought of that? Perhaps he can take the Blue Eagle over into his new field. In that case everybody who refuses to make a profit out of war will hang a Blue Eagle in his window. The first Blue Eagle to go up will be on the du Pont window. Mr. Irenée du Pont continues to insist that his firm made no profit out of the United States in the last war.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

The Soviets Laugh

THE LAST Soviet screen comedy ("Marionettes") was both slapstick and politically earnest, but not funny. "The Tsar Wants to Sleep" (Cameo Theatre, New York City) is also political satire and also gets off on a very heavy left foot; but when its fun begins it is pretty good fun, well sustained. This in spite of drawbacks. The lighting is terrible; the camera, as often as not, is out of focus; some of the outdoor settings are so obvious you expect to see houses start waving in the wind; and the technical makeshifts that must serve to build up mob scenes, etc., are painful. As usual, the dialogue titles are poorly timed, politically right, and heavy. (The music, by Prokofiev, is good.)

But so much only amounts to the trappings of comedy, in which field Hollywood has become so smooth and airy as to spoil us. Even in such essential matters as attitude toward the material, the film is not perfect. Comedy, before you get into the swing of it and forgive everything, is taken with a frightfully serious air. Director Feinzimmer wants to make fun of the silly aristocrats, and so he involves them in the most unfunny slapstick and stylized extremes; and often his way of getting over a humorous point is to come out and beat you over the ears with it.

But no matter for that: the bulk of the picture is delightful. The plot has something to do with the court of Paul I, imperious and crazy as a bat. It is a plot that develops freely, and out of itself. There is a great deal of mugging around at first, but pretty soon there comes the problem of, Who was it that shouted and woke the damn Tsar up? It was his aide, who must naturally find a culprit, and finally manufactures one out of whole cloth, making up a mythical lieutenant. So there is the mummery of flogging this ethereal culprit and marching him off with two guards and a drummer to Siberia. But the Tsar comes to feel this lieutenant has acted so decently that he is one to be trusted: the Tsar recalls him, makes him a colonel, a general, and finally, with appropriate pomp, head of the Russian army. After this abstract officer has gone through enough situations—been married, bedded, deeded lands, and all—he falls ill, goes to hospital, passes away. (All with a blank pan on the part of everybody.) During the funeral funds are missing: the officer is demoted, post-mortem, and the Tsar sighs: it is so hard to be a Tsar. And you return to the first sequence, the bell ringing, the soldiers of the Tsar on guard, on the walls over the city, which is quiet: the Tsar sleeps.

Impossible to describe all the situations, of course—the wedding and the drunken ride in the carriage, both scenes quite silly and somehow beautiful; the Tsar and his nose (M. Yanshin gives a good comic touch to the cunning petulance of the part); the drunken bedroom scenes, which were completely mangled by the censor. When the film leaves its thesis of degeneracy in the court, and goes into the fantastic, it has the irresistible wit and boundless invention of true comedy. And it is good to see this, to see the Soviet studios leave off the theme of revolution, which they had for some time been handling in a purely formal manner, and lay aside Marxian textbooks, and laugh for a bit.

OTIS FERGUSON.

CORRESPONDENCE

How to Get Good Housing

SIR: There are some phases of the housing controversy between Messrs. Ickes and Moffett that have not received much emphasis in the press. The effort to sidetrack a real housing program in favor of a deflationary private-enterprise campaign began with two significant releases early in November by Mr. Donald Richberg and Mr. H. I. Harriman.

"The building of new homes ought to be done by private enterprise," Mr. Richberg stated in support of the F.H.A. Perhaps it ought to be, but the experience of these many years has proved conclusively that private enterprise never has provided *housing* and that from the nature of a profit society it never has, never can and never will take care of shelter for the lower income groups; and, moreover, the last ten years of building in England has completely exploded the "filtering up" theory. An exhaustive report of the Internationalen Verbandes für Wohnungswesen asks this question of the official housing bodies of various European countries: "Has the time come when state aid can be dispensed with and the responsibility for the provision of dwellings be transferred back to private enterprise?"

Replies were received from Belgium, Germany, England, France, Holland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and were unanimously in the negative. Belgium stated:

> Private enterprise on a profit-producing basis, without support from public funds, is not in a position to supply a sufficient number of small dwellings of a suitable standard to meet the requirements of the broad masses of the population and at rents they can afford to pay.
>
> Why? Because the profits on invested capital would not be sufficient, *i.e.*, the rents that could be demanded would not suffice to cover interest on capital, cost of maintenance and taxes.

France reports:

> . . . The economic conditions resulting from the War have made it impossible for private enterprise in France to provide dwellings on a profitable basis for the requirements of the broad masses of the population and of the middle class. . . . In the Paris district—and one might say in the whole of France—private enterprise has not built a single dwelling for the worker on a profit-earning basis.

The tenor of all the reports was identical. Now housing is not, and industrial recovery is not, just building houses for people who can afford to pay for them out of income over a period of years, thus increasing the debts of those least able to be in debt. Besides, there aren't enough such people, and lowering wages still more will not increase the number. You can't get out of debt by increasing debt: the government must aid redistribution of wealth by spending and taxing. The P.W.A. program, inadequate as it is compared to England or pre-Hitler Germany, at least begins to give government recognition to that vast majority of Americans whose earn-

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ings do not permit them to pay profits to private enterprise, to the right of decent shelter somewhere near a price they can afford, England, through the National Housing Committee, which includes Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Lord Amulree and Sir Basil Blackett of the Bank of England, acknowledges public responsibility for housing in the opening paragraph of "A National Housing Policy":

> One fundamental principle lies behind all our discussions. The provision of housing accommodation, not below a minimum standard, for every family in the United Kingdom at a rent within family capacity to pay should be accepted as a public responsibility and a national service.

Mr. Harriman quoted England's recent building boom to back up his and Mr. Richberg's (and Mr. Moffett's) pleas for private enterprise. He conveniently forgets what led up to that "boom." The year from June 30, 1933, to June 30, 1934, saw only 59,049 state-assisted houses erected, while from March to March of those years 209,836 unassisted houses were built. But from the Armistice to June, 1933, there were erected 1,133,895 state-aided dwellings. Obviously the "boom" owed much to the purchasing power created by the state in the previous years. And it should be further noted that the decrease in state assistance during the past year was due to a reactionary government policy which has since been reversed —with the Labor Party calling for more liberal planning: *homes*, not just shelter on a minimal basis.

The whole field, which a real housing program should cover, is one that private enterprise has never made the slightest attempt to touch. In fact the Richberg-Moffett efforts to stimulate private building *for profit* should be helped by the government expenditure of vast funds for labor and materials at union wages. The number of those able to pay a profitable rent would be increased thereby. This, it may be observed, is the case in Switzerland, which reported that

> . . . by far the greatest number [of all dwellings built in the country] were erected by private enterprise, which is explained chiefly by the fact that on the whole, wages in Switzerland are higher in respect to their purchasing capacity than before the War, so that most workers and employees are in a position to pay rents on the basis of which house building becomes a paying proposition. . . . At the same time private enterprise has not been able to meet the requirements of the poorer working classes or of those with large families. This had to be done either by the communities or with the assistance of public funds. . . .

Reducing the standard of living by lowering wages cannot produce the purchasing power from which profits are derived. A housing program wisely conceived and courageously carried out has the patent merit of increasing purchasing power, producing real wealth, and at the same time providing decent shelter for millions of Americans who *never*, at least under the present system, will be able to pay profitable rent. Eventually the government must accept responsibility for housing these millions, as has been done abroad, or else see its citizens sink into ever increasing squalor and degradation.

Nor is Mr. Harriman's suggestion of creating subsistence-homestead suburbs to Megalopolis a solution. Our cities are bankrupt now because of the existence of slum areas on their periphery, created by the very private speculative enterprise Mr. Harriman hopes to encourage. The equally vile small town and rural conditions he ignores altogether. Very significantly his statement reads, "We do not want to decentralize industry, but to decentralize the workers and give them their own homes and a plot of ground where they can raise some of their food. That's the way to beat depressions." That's the way to beat depressions for the rich, all right. Depress the living standard as measured in real wages, create an industrial peasantry whose debt to capital remains constant, and cyclical depressions will cease because the depression and the serfdom of the worker will be permanent. Such schemes are but thinly disguised efforts to enslave the working population through debt, that the few may benefit: they are the road to fascism. The lowering of real wages, the increasing of actual debt through "home ownership" as proposed by the deflationists, will only drive people, and will eventually force the huge government subsidies that will be only momentarily avoided. Purchasing power, real wages, higher standards, security, are in the balance with debt and the menace of fascism that debt implies through its snowballing of immediate profits to the few, by the continued misery of the many.

Last June President Roosevelt broadcast:

> But, in addition to this, our immediate task, we must look to the larger future. I have pointed out to the Congress that we are seeking to find the way once more to well known, long established but to some degree forgotten ideals and values. We seek the security of the men, women and children of the nation.
>
> That security involves added means of providing better homes for the people of the nation. That is the first principle of our future program.

Security and Homes: do these words mean anything?

New York City. HENRY S. CHURCHILL.

Not So Bad as Reported

SIR: Through no fault of his, but because of data unfortunately issued before the tabulations were complete, Mr. William P. Mangold, on page 17 of The New Republic for November 14, understates the accomplishments of the several Regional Boards maintained by the National Labor Relations Board in the different parts of the country. It is important that the facts be set forth accurately.

In the first place, no close comparisons should be made of statistical reports made by the National Labor Relations Board and by the National Labor Board, for since the National Labor Relations Board took office the system of recording cases has been changed and standardized. More important, under the legislation and Executive Order of last June, the staff of mediators maintained by the National Labor Board has been disestablished and practically all non-7a cases turned over to the Division of Conciliation. The result is that of the 1,447 cases referred to by Mr. Mangold, 1426, or 98.5 percent, involved alleged violations of Section 7a. The percentages of such cases reported from time to time by the National Labor Board were very much smaller. Of course, it is precisely these cases which prove to be most obstinate in obtaining a settlement at the time they are heard.

In August and September a total of 1,447 cases were handled by the Regional Labor Boards, and 928 of these were disposed of or "closed." The remainder, 519, were pending at the end of September. Most of these had been recently filed; what success would be realized in obtaining settlements remained to be seen. Of the 928 cases closed, 411 were settled by agreement. This was 44.3 percent as against the less than 30 percent reported by Mr. Mangold. There were 146 decisions, some accepted, others not; 371 cases were otherwise closed, chiefly by withdrawal of complaint or reference to the National Board.

During August and September, 330 cases of actual or threatened strikes were handled. Of strikes averted there were 87, of actual strikes settled there were 182. In the remaining 61 cases, or 18.5 percent, settlement was not effected.

H. A. MILLIS, Member,

Washington, D. C. National Labor Relations Board.

Dat Ol' Debbil Style

SIR: I hope very much that pertinent comment from poets, on your series of little anthologies, is in order. The "Eight Proletarian Poets" [The New Republic, November 28] have shed an unexpectedly sharp and fortuitously useful luminosity on a solid fact of new poetic activities.

Is it possible that the editors of The New Republic do not divine the *paradox* inherent in the eight specimens of work instant? . . . The fact is that the styles, general manner and techniques of these proletarian poets (as opposed to their *content*) fairly reek with the most hated of the bourgeois poetry: Eliot, MacLeish, Hart Crane, etc.

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. . . The situation seems to be that these young poets do not, and cannot, apparently, recognize the fact that an ideology (such as "Marxism" or "proletarianism") does not automatically create its poetic exponents and that it is an axiom that poetic form must arise from the specific nature of the poetic content. The proletarians apparently have merely annexed the common bourgeois fallacy that once one writes in rhyme, meter and rhythm, the magic work of poetry is done. It should be intellectually elementary that cadences from Mr. Eliot or Mr. Crane, whatever their intrinsic value, *do not enhance the meaning* of a proletarian sentiment.

New York City. PARKER TYLER.

Fighting for the Unemployed

SIR: I read with great deal of interest and appreciation your editorial, "Are the Unemployed People?" in your November 28 issue and believe you have done a very good job in analyzing the relationship between unemployed groups and the relief administrations throughout the country. No person who is aware of the miserable relief situation now existing and the work that has been carried on by the unemployed can deny your statement that what increases in relief have been made have been due in no small measure to the pressure and protests of the unemployed organizations. Furthermore, no person engaged in unemployed work takes any view but that the necessary further increase in relief amounts and relief administrations will come only through continued and growing mass pressure from the unemployed.

You do give the impression, however, perhaps unwittingly, that it has been Communists alone who have been principally engaged in organizing and directing the unemployed for economic justice to the unemployed. You say, "We do know that in many parts of the country the Communists are the only group that has shown any real and continuing interest in the problems of what is now the submerged one-seventh of our population." I wish to remind you that most of the major unemployed organizations of the country are neither Communist led nor Communist controlled. The demonstrations of November 24, which took place from coast to coast under the direction of the National Action Committee, were held for the most part by organizations that have practically no Communist influence. Groups in some twenty-three states participated in these demonstrations. You say also, "In city after city including New York, Communist-led demonstrations have helped to drive into the public consciousness the critical situation of the jobless, and have made possible larger appropriations—municipal, state and national—than would otherwise probably have been obtained." I wish to call to your attention also that in such key cities as New York, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Columbus, Toledo and Baltimore, to mention but a few, there are powerful organization of the unemployed, neither led nor influenced by Communists.

The organizations in the National Action Committee compose the overwhelming majority of the organized unemployed of the country and are not only showing "a real and continuing interest" in the problems of the unemployed, but are fighting militantly on behalf of the unemployed. I write all this, not in a spirit of criticism but for the record, and in order that some additional enlightenment may be thrown on those problems discussed by your editorial.

DAVID LASSER, Secretary,
New York City. National Action Committee.

Mr. Nagel Answers

SIR: Copies of the letters from Messrs. Polakov and Allen protesting my handling of Korzybski's "Science and Sanity" have just reached me. [These letters were printed in the issue of October 24]. While I cannot defend my brief notice of the book without supplementing it with a long essay, I should like to make two comments.

1. Mr. Polakov apparently can do no better in taking me to task than to quote against me from the blurbs printed with the book. This appeal to authority does not impress me, since I have read the book with some care and have also noticed the high praises from eminent men which the [illegible] While I respect very highly the men who endorse "Science and Sanity," I must differ with them in their evaluation of it; moreover, I am not convinced that they have all undergone the same labor with the book that I have.

2. Whatever be the explanation of my unfavorable view of the book—it may be a "blockage" as Mr. Polakov suggests—it is my considered opinion that "Science and Sanity" has no merit whatsoever, and is not worth the serious attention of readers of The New Republic. Its main thesis rests on a misunderstanding of recent work on the foundations of logic. The few interesting suggestions on technical problems, to which I referred in my note, have not been developed systematically by Count Korzybski, and they play only a very inconsiderable role in his book.

Warsaw, Poland. ERNEST NAGEL.

The New Theatre Wants New Plays

SIR: The New Theatre of Philadelphia, a collective organization of playwrights, directors, actors, stage technicians and musicians, has recently been launched, with an enrolment already of some 165 members. It prefers whenever possible to produce the work as of yet unknown American dramatists whose work is nevertheless honest, significant and concerned with the struggles of our day. Dramatists who believe their manuscripts fall into the repertory of such a theatre are asked to send them to the New Theatre, 2313 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

Philadelphia, Pa. FRIEDA NURENBERG.

A Soviet Information Bureau

SIR: The Friends of the Soviet Union have officially opened a newly reorganized Information Bureau. We shall be glad to answer questions concerning labor, health, law, agriculture and all other phases of Socialist construction in the U.S.S.R.. Address all questions to the Information Bureau of the Friends of the Soviet Union, 80 East Eleventh Street, Room 234. There is no charge for the service and prompt answers are assured.

New York City. I. CASEY.

Extracts from Letters

RONALD LANE LATIMER writes that he is working on a biography of the English poet, Ernest Dowson (1867-1900), and would appreciate hearing from persons who might know anything about the poet or who might have letters or unpublished manuscripts of his. Mr. Latimer may be reached in care of The Alcestis Press, 551 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

The Prisoners' Relief Department of the International Labor Defense is conducting a Christmas drive for funds for political prisoners and their families. All contributions should be sent to the "Xmas Fund," Prisoners' Relief Department of the International Labor Defense, 80 East Eleventh Street, Room 610, New York City.

The Executive Committee of the League for Mutual Aid writes: "We think your readers will be interested to learn of a venture based on the principles of mutual aid that is known as the League for Mutual Aid. This little known organization is made up of members joined together to aid each other in getting jobs and to lend money without interest. . . . An office with a competent secretary is maintained as a clearing house for jobs. A revolving loan fund has been built up from returnable deposits and contributions of the members. Unemployed members list themselves for vacancies as they occur. Loans are made without interest or red tape upon the endorsements of members or friends. During the past year 250 jobs were filled and $13,600 loaned. All this was done by a small organization of 600 members, operating on dues of $5 a year. . . . We invite any of your readers who are interested to join with us, to report jobs they hear of, to avail themselves of our services and to coöperate in all possible ways. The League for Mutual Aid office is at Room 2004, 104 Fifth Avenue, New York City. Members will be welcomed from all

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Valley Forge

Valley Forge, by Maxwell Anderson. Guild Theatre, December 10, 1934.

WASHINGTON, in the first place, belongs to an age when a man played a role. You set yourself a role, or position, in which you would act; and from the nature of this role derived the perspective within which you were to be seen. What might seem artificiality, or even hypocrisy, to some callow modern, was to the people of that era only the fulfilment of some clear intention or final resolve. And Washington was a gentleman within a definite civilization or society. That there are gentlemen still among us, most of us would admit or even insist upon. That we live in the midst of a society defined and resting on some recognized basis of theory or social order nobody could say.

Trying to express Washington, then, as a whole is an impossible task. Most of the conceptions within which he acted, formulating his character and expressing his mind, would be unfamiliar now to the general public. From this fact partly derives the silly distortions that such a character has endured from such of his historians as wish to make an involved turnabout of their portrayal—since they cannot gauge or convey what lies behind the main sum of Washington they fall back on wooden teeth and sex. I sometimes think that we could illustrate a great deal of the Washington crux by one remark of his, treasured in the Lee family and remembered all his life by General Lee. The saying is on the surface simple, but is not so; you could not have a better example of the personal and the social combined. (Even the word "virtuous" that he uses has a different solidity of meaning from what it might mean now.) "A man," Washington said, "ought not only to be virtuous in reality, but he must always appear so."

Mr. Maxwell Anderson shows his theatrical tact by avoiding both these impossible phases of Washington's history. He does not, beyond certain implications, show Washington in his international aspect, nor try to place him in some complete assumption of a role, however splendid. In "Valley Forge" we have for the most part an aspect of crisis, of character and deed, that anybody in the audience might understand or, at least, respond to. It is a critical moment in the history of the Revolution which we are shown and in the frame of which the entire play is kept. The soldiers are starving, the cold is intense, and desertions are too frequent; surrender threatens. The earlier scenes of the play present these same frontier soldiers, their special kind of humor and their special virtues, in combination with Washington's influence on their minds. In the next act we see the British Headquarters and General Howe. A lady who once fell in love with Washington and loves him still is resolved to make her way to his headquarters. After being refused, she is used finally as a means of deceiving Washington with regard to the French alliance. She arrives in a man's uniform, but finds Washington too busy and absorbed to think much about her.

We have then a scene in which one of the soldiers reports rich bins of corn belonging to the British. Together they organize a foraging raid, and there is a good comic invention where one of them who has been up to then barelegged, last act members of Congress come to interview the commander. The treachery, subversions and self-seeking at the center of the government are obvious. The drama is thrown back on Washington, on him its development must depend. From then on it moves towards his final decision to sign a peace with the British. The climax is turned from that, finally, through the rough loyalty of those soldiers who have returned from the corn's capture. In this last scene of "Valley Forge" the cumulative mass of motifs is admirable: the young boy who has risen from his sickbed to die in action, the wounded comic soldier, the rags and dying, the rough courage and half-mutinous free spirit, all lead to a superb final curtain in which the theme of liberty, through the dramatic and poetic imagination, is suddenly realized, warm and compelling. For drama of this nature, homely and tinged with poetry, this is the right direction. Some sort of psychological realism might doubtless discover how to demur, analyze, negate or inflate the idea of freedom. Mr. Anderson has left the idea simple and full, as it must have been for those men that we see in the Valley Forge hovel and as it must have been even for Washington himself. He knew that he must create the future, however ideal and destined to be imitated by revolutionary Europe, in terms of the simple and virile present that lay ready to hand. Few final curtains have the emotional ease and force of that in "Valley Forge."

The settings for this new play would add more to their scenes by looking either more like nature or more like art. And the play provides material for the lesser roles that could be much further developed. Mr. Erskine Sanford as the congressional visitor, and Mr. Victor Kilian, the soldier comic, are capital. Miss Margalo Gillmore leaves the lady, the only suggestion of a love theme in the play, quite undetermined. She and Lord Howe (Mr. Reginald Mason) play their scene together as if somewhat under the aegis of English social comedy—Sheridan, shall we say? When, therefore, Miss Gillmore appears at Washington's headquarters in her bright uniform, we are not sure how to take it: clearly, Washington is high, resolute and absorbed, but the motif of the lady's visit loses its content. For example, what does she mean, even, by love?

The problem of acting Washington if he were taken in a longer vista, seen under his remarkable and widely varied aspects, would be enough to stump any actor. But the dramatist here has made the task easier by keeping Washington chiefly within a certain dramatic situation or moment in experience. There are sidelights of character, gradations of feeling, that arise from the man in general; but, for the most part, the dramatic attack is simplified. Mr. Philip Merivale was a very wise choice. In his performance the conception of vigor and force displayed has nothing loud or obvious about it, and this is right, too, since Washington was civilized. The English spoken is admirable and a great deal closer to Washington's English, very likely, than most of the speech heard nowadays on our stage; in fact, there were moments in the speaking elsewhere among the players at the Guild that suggested why Mrs. Washington always spoke of "dirty democrats." Mr. Merivale's Washington has a real degree of elegance, without any of what might seem sheer stuffiness. His performance is well graded and, at the same time, curiously intense.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Two Cromwells

IT IS doubtless by accident that Mr. Buchan and Mr. Belloc arrive at the same instant on the field of controversy, but the circumstance lends interest to both books.[1] They represent the opposed views of Cromwell's character and career that have been held since Carlye placed the regicide among the heroes—the hero as king. Hero worship, whatever its value in ethics and politics, is a distorting medium for history. Carlyle's vision of Cromwell as the voice and sword-arm of God was bound up with belief in deity. It was inevitable that the vision should fade as faith declined. Of the reaction against Carlyle both authors are in evidence, but while Mr. Buchan pauses at conclusions that will be accepted as fair and just, Mr. Belloc rushes far beyond them into the ground of detraction and calumny across which Carlyle once advanced so triumphantly.

Buchan's "Oliver Cromwell" is a conscientious book that demands conscientious reading. He presents Oliver, the natural man inspired by faith in supernatural forces which expanded his personality into greatness, but living in a real world of practical exigencies of which he took account with varying success. Nowhere does the author blink the facts. He does not, like Carlyle, palliate the massacre at Drogheda on Cromwell's plea that the spirit of God was upon him and his men, but he notes Cromwell's words, "being in the heat of action," and his reasoned apology: "It will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future." Here Cromwell the enthusiast and Cromwell the realist appear side by side. Mr. Buchan has supplemented the official record and Cromwell's own story in letters and speeches, by industrious use of contemporary authorities, especially the vast deposit of the journalism of the time in the form of pamphlets and sermons. His accounts of Cromwell's battles are clear and impartial. In short, his work is honestly and admirably done.

In contrast, Mr. Belloc's book is special pleading. As a Roman Catholic he introduces under the title "The Catholic Menace" a long account of the numbers and position of the Catholics in England in the early seventeenth century, with the excuse that the influence of this factor in exciting the Puritans has never been recognized. Milton in some of his best known lines advertised the proselyting vigor of the Roman Church—the "grim wolf" who "with privy paw daily devours apace." Moreover, Mr. Belloc is an adept in detraction. He proposes to rescue Cromwell from his idolaters by showing him precisely for what he was. And this was what? A captain of cavalry and nothing more. "He was not a religious enthusiast, a leader of men and all that, who happened to take on the profession of arms—he was rather a cavalry commander who happened also to be a Puritan." Often this detraction is about as subtle as Antony's speech to the Romans. Of Cromwell's veracity he tells us that "in the department where soldiers are more disposed to abandon truth than other men he is singularly blameless." Then he quotes Cromwell's letter written three days after the Battle of Marston Moor, in which he failed to give due credit to his Scotch allies. "But we must remember," he adds, "that Cromwell hated the Scotch and the Scottish alliance, that he was affected by the heat of an action in which he had been wounded, and that in a man fresh from such excitement the lapse is natural *though despicable.*" (Italics mine.)

It is useful to compare Messrs. Buchan and Belloc with reference to several episodes. Both agree necessarily that Cromwell more than any other man was responsible for the fate of Charles I. Mr. Belloc argues on speculative grounds that when the king was a prisoner in contact with Parliament at Hampton Court, Cromwell frightened him with the danger of assassination, facilitated his escape and directed his flight to the Isle of Wight, whence he could be produced, "when the time should arrive for the carrying out by Oliver and the army of that dreadful purpose which was so steadily pursued." For this view, says Mr. Buchan, "there is no atom of proof." Only after terms repeatedly offered and refused, the "Engagement" of the king with the Scotch and the second civil war did Cromwell make up his mind that "the king must be brought to trial, for the blood he had shed and treason to the liberties of England." Mr. Belloc applauds the king for his refusal to renounce his prerogatives; he is silent upon the long course of double dealing, of negotiation with Parliament, with the army, with the Scotch and with foreign powers, which ended in universal distrust.

Another and most important point in which Mr. Belloc and Mr. Buchan are in agreement is Cromwell's failure to achieve lasting results after the great revolutionary act of the execution of the king. To consolidate the revolution and preserve its fruits was the burden of the plea that Milton made to him with anxious eloquence in the "Second Defense of the English People," and in the sonnet, with its famous reminder: "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war." After the execution of the king it was clear that government existed no longer in Parliament, but only in the army and its Lord General. Cromwell, however, had not the temper of a revolutionist. He constantly opposed and thwarted the radical demands of the Levelers in the army, who through their soldiers' councils and "agitators" sought to promote social revolution. He felt that a monarch was essential to the constitution and to the legal status of Parliament itself. Shortly before the trial he told that body: "If any man whatsoever hath carried on the design of deposing the king and disinheriting his posterity . . . he should be the greatest traitor and rebel in the world; but, since the Providence of God hath cast this upon us, I cannot but submit to Providence."

But to carry on the revolution even in terms of theocracy was impossible to a man of Cromwell's temperament. He was forever casting about for some earthly authority. Four times he summoned a Parliament of sorts, and each time dismissed it as a broken tool. Mr. Belloc finds much amusement in this spectacle of a man "attempting to jump a broad ditch, missing by a good three feet, climbing back up the muddy bank, taking a second run, missing again, floundering again," etc. Still, to say that "there never was man less of a statesman than Oliver" is absurd. It is true that Oliver did not "inform" the state with his own personality as he did the army. He was never easy in regard to his own position, in spite of ceremonies and titles, and it is probable that such temptation as came to him to call himself

[1] Oliver Cromwell, by John Buchan. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 458 pages. $4.50.
Cromwell, by Hilaire Belloc. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 356 pages. $4

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he governed wisely, with peace at home and prestige abroad.

Mr. Belloc declares that he was without a foreign policy, that he was the tool of Mazarin, that his famous intervention in behalf of the Vaudois in Piedmont was evidence of his "sincerity and simplicity," but as statesmanship "deplorable." Against this we have the tribute of Clarendon, minister to Charles II: "His greatness at home was but a shadow of the glory he had abroad. It was hard to discover which feared him the most, France, Spain or the Low Countries." In fact, it is in the perplexities and triumphs of his rule that we find the real Cromwell. He was a revolutionist and a soldier by force of circumstances. Essentially he was a nationalist from the age of Elizabeth, a constitutionalist from that of James I, with a Puritan's faith in the living God in his heart.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

A Medical Matter

Birth Control: Its Use and Misuse, by Dorothy Dunbar Bromley. New York: Harper and Brothers. 304 pages. $2.50.

ALTHOUGH this book presents a comprehensive and quite detailed survey and description of birth-control methods and practice, it cannot in any sense be regarded as a practical handbook of contraception. Mrs. Bromley insists emphatically and repeatedly that contraceptive procedure is definitely a medical matter, and that any person who believes that his participation in reproduction can be satisfactorily regulated by following the gratuitous suggestions of friends, the advice of drug-store clerks or the diversely bizarre precepts of old wives' tales is sadly mistaken and is likely to be unpleasantly disillusioned. Particularly the latter. Nowhere is the baneful influence of superstitious and irrational taboos more strikingly displayed than in the broad field of reproduction. The ancient distorted sentiments with reference to sex have made it the last stronghold to resist the assaults of reason, foresight and intelligence, while the urgently felt need to prevent a disastrous increase of family or of population has taxed human ingenuity to suggest laborious, painful, disgusting, useless and sometimes partially successful methods of preventing the conception or, failing that, the birth of an unwanted child.

The author is well fitted for her task by long study of the subject and personal observation of the phenomena and acquaintance with the leading authorities involved. After setting forth in a summary way the importance and immediacy of the problem, she proceeds to review in a sympathetically critical manner the principal techniques and appliances now in use or recommended. The alluring expedient of the "safe period," which has recently received such surprising and enthusiastic endorsement by the Roman Catholic Church, is, in accordance with the best contemporary medical opinion, dismissed as far too complicated and unreliable to serve as a chief resource for the great majority of women. Abstinence and withdrawal are put aside as too undependable, and too dangerous physically, psychically and socially. The wide range of chemical and mechanical devices is reviewed and appraised, and the final weight of approval is given to the practice most generally recommended by American clinics.

A sympathetic introduction by Dr. Robert Latou Dickinson lends added authority to this valuable volume.

One Being Musing Dozing

Portraits and Prayers, by Gertrude Stein. New York: Random House. 214 pages. $2.50.

THIS VOLUME contains the famous "Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia," the portraits of Matisse and Picasso, first published in "Camera Work," and a great deal of material not previously published, including portraits of Cézanne, Juan Gris, Jean Cocteau, "Sitwell Edith Sitwell," Muriel Draper, T. S. Eliot and Virgil Thomson.

The pieces are considerably varied and make a representative selection of Miss Stein's work. They range from the simple and engaging to the exasperating and opaque. Some of them, such as "Storyette H. M.," are amusing and lucid and stand by themselves. Others are sometimes interesting if you know, or know anything about, the people. Others are so abstract and repetitious that they are, to me at any rate, unreadable: in them she seems to be digesting impressions by processes as subterranean and slow and in a mood as phlegmatic and languid as those that may follow a comfortable meal. I like better a little series of epigrams called "Anonymous Portraits," in which she makes her points with a few phrases:

"I know I know I know you. You know you know that."

"I see the moon and the moon sees me. God bless the moon and God bless me and when this you see remember me. In this way one-fifth of the bananas bought are shown."

There is nothing new to say about Miss Stein. She is a first-rate literary talent to whom something very strange and probably unfortunate has happened—perhaps it is the basic emptiness of the life of the artistic foreigner in Paris. Even Miss Stein has now come back. It will be interesting to see whether her work is affected by her return to America. But in the meantime, if you are interested in writing, her original and distinguished literary gift may still be tasted even in those pieces where it seems volatilized or diluted.

EDMUND WILSON.

The Art of the Orient

The Civilizations of the East, by René Grousset. Volume III: China. 370 pages. Volume IV: Japan. 345 pages. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $5 each.

WITH THESE two volumes, the ambitious project of a history of the civilizations of the East is concluded. The first, and in my opinion the best volume of the four, deals with the arts of the Near East; the second with the arts of India. The present volumes deal with the arts of China and Japan. Physically they maintain the high standards set for the series. They are lovely books, abundantly and well illustrated, and they sell for what the careful bookbuyer would call a reasonable price. But the text of the last two volumes is disappointing; and considering the undertaking now, in its completion, I cannot say that M. Grousset's attempt at a synthesis of the civilizations of the East is a success.

M. Grousset is director of the Musée Cernuschi and associate director of the Musée Guimet, one of the leading museums of the Oriental arts in the world. He excels in the accurate, catalogue description of art objects. But when it comes to establishing those objects in their social and historical setting, he is beyond his depth. The limitation he

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is good only in his professional capacity. A great cataloguer, a Linnaeus of art, has an important role to perform. But M. Grousset, obsessed by the solemnities of his profession and the fogs of incense still ritually discharged over the holy name of art, considered the task of cultural interpretation a matter of divination rather than scholarship. He has worked out several laborious and unimaginative generalizations, and within them, rather than within the societies in which they occurred, he has placed his art objects; and the results are frequently bizarre, and generally fruitless.

No writer on art, any more than an ordinary historian, dares nowadays project a book without promising to make it at least a sociological study. Art is considered a special point of view from which to survey a civilization. Faure's "History of Art," the most spectacular predecessor in M. Grousset's field, also started with this program, but Faure, not being a museum official, felt a little freer in carrying it out. Also, being a more poetic writer, his divinations read a little more persuasively. But the best works in these fields remain, for the arts of the Near East, the books of the old historian, Maspero, who had an intuitive feeling for the reality of labor, or perhaps an instructed one through seeing gangs of diggers grubbing around the pyramids and temples their forgotten forefathers had raised; and for the arts of the Far East, Ernest Fenollosa, who saw a transfusion of civilization going on, under his eyes, in Japan, and noted the tumultuous social results.

To M. Grousset, art-ooming in his library, these insights do not come. He has his theories that explain everything and make study in other directions appear superfluous. His chief generalization about Chinese art is that it expresses "immanent spiritual force" (Faure's is "a dedication to death"). Apart from the fact that this would rule out a vast part of Chinese art in its more obvious applications, it is so vague as to make application impractical. In his equally vague historical analogies, he makes other errors. The Tang civilization is compared to the Roman because both were conquering and imperial, yet within their whole cultural complexes two epochs could scarcely be further apart.

His chief generalization for Japanese art is that it is intuitively classical; this in spite of the fact that Japan has a history long enough to have run through several cultures, through all their ages: primitivism, classicism, romanticism and decadence. The result is that M. Grousset makes some egregious mistakes. He can call a poetry so decidedly impressionistic as the tanka and hokku, a classical poetry; and a novel so gorgeously romantic as Murasaki's "Tale of Genji," a classical novel.

His promise of social analyses meets with little effort at fulfilment. There is only the briefest reference to popular arts and crafts. M. Grousset follows successions of political power, invasions, changes in dynasties, and draws perfunctory conclusions from them. Face to face with a social actuality, he does not recognize it. Speaking about the popular art of the Japanese print, he observes that it developed out of admiration for the courtesans who were in vogue, and out of the life of the brothel districts. Here is a social actuality that might have led him to consider certain features of Japanese society, its revealing attitudes toward women, its forms of exploitation that were expressed in other works of art. But M. Grousset gives us nothing but catalogue description of Japanese prints and a naïve astonishment that respectable Japanese critics should ignore a form of art whose achievements are so apparent to "objective-minded" Western connoisseurs.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Women of This Earth

We Sagebrush Folks, by Annie Pike Greenwood. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 483 pages. $3.50.

The Barter Lady: A Woman Farmer Sees It Through. by Evelyn Harris. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 338 pages. $2.50.

Desert Wife, by Hilda Faunce. Boston: Little Brown and Company. 305 pages. $3.

A FARM can be lived on in several ways, as the women of these three books show Mrs. Greenwood always saw herself as an outsider, a cultivated, small-town woman, transplanted by an incredible fate into the crude pioneer life of a southern Idaho irrigation project. Did not her small hands and wrists attest "generations of parasitic ancestors?" Had she not attended three colleges? Did she not, a Carol Kennicott of the sagebrush, spend three years vainly trying to uplift threshers to the plane of "a dainty dessert, fine linen napkins and a centerpiece of flowers" when all they wanted was segmented pies in tins and then more pies? Mrs. Greenwood was of course thoroughly democratic with her bucolic neighbors. She is appallingly democratic and folksy not only with people and animals but with Nature and God ("Oh my dear, understanding, humorous, loving God," she calls him on one occasion). But neither birth nor death nor anything else ever made her forget the difference between herself and the other sagebrush folks.

There is hardly a page of this book free from egocentric babbling and much of it is atrociously written, but—and this is the amazing thing—in spite of all this it does convey movingly something of the intimate fabric of life on those Western farms, does recreate to some extent the quality and the tragedy of the farmer, the farm woman and the farm child. In those rare moments when Mrs. Greenwood forgets her heroine and writes of things she has seen and experienced, she occasionally paints word pictures that stick in the mind like burrs: of children with blackened, bleeding hands picking spuds, supperless, into the far hours of the night; of the strained face of a six-year-old boy frantically trying to control a herd of one hundred hogs, each "nearly as big as himself"; of what a phonograph and some fine records, bought and owned coöperatively, meant to the families in Mrs. Greenwood's school district (a project Mrs. Greenwood herself inspired and helped carry to success); of the time on the farm when cows are about to calve, when "farm pets must be given away and human beings do without milk, butter and cream"; or, stranger still to the city-bred who think of farms as flowing with milk and honey, of the long spring months "before the garden came," when the farmer's family lived exclusively on pork and potatoes. The pork "nearly always became rancid" and the potatoes were largely uneatable with black rot. She writes movingly, too, of insane farm women who are not in asylums because—in her own pregnant phrase—"they are still on the farm." In short, if you can forget Mrs. Greenwood or, failing that, get beyond the irritation she inspires, you will find some valuable material and sound sense in this book.

A genuine dirt farmer, Evelyn Harris piles up with vivid and concrete detail a thoroughly convincing picture of a farmer's life. Something of a rugged individualist, her farmer's conservatism only partially tempered by the feminism of a woman doing a man's job, she seeks no quarter and asks protection only from foreigners, rich amateur farmers and union labor. She owns and operates th[illegible] f[illegible]

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in all about 600 acres—on Chesapeake Bay. Although trained as a musician, she decided when her husband died, and left her five children and the heavily mortgaged farm property, to carry on his work and rear their children on the homestead she loved. The story of how she did this is, in many ways, exhilarating reading. It is a story of pluck, resourcefulness and zest in living. But Mrs. Harris is no Pollyanna. She is fully aware of the odds against the farmer—even though she rather quaintly defines him in part as "a man with from ten to fifty thousand dollars invested in his farm business . . . whose ideas of investment are accepted as sound and good business"—but who, nevertheless, by her own account suffers unjust discrimination from banks when he seeks money or credit, and gross trickery from commission merchants. All this Mrs. Harris has herself experienced. An artist in barter, when short of cash she pays for the goods and services she needs with farm produce, firewood and vacations on the farm and so, according to the book's optimistic subtitle, "sees it through."

Something of the same inspiriting quality, the same talent for clear and direct narrative, and far greater distinction of style, mark Hilda Faunce's story of her trek from Oregon to Arizona and her life as helper to her husband at his Navajo trading station. Ken, the husband was a desert-bred man who hated the green dampness of Oregon and welcomed the return to the empty sunlit country when their Oregon venture failed. And Hilda Faunce loved the lush Oregon country and dreaded the desert, but it seemed to offer them a livelihood. Life at the trading post meant hard work, loneliness and actual danger when Ken was away for weeks rounding up cattle and his wife was left alone to manage the store. Their job came to mean also winning the confidence of the Indians, and the growth in Hilda Faunce of an understanding and respect for their ways which her husband already had. In the end she thought of the years spent among them as "the most colorful as well as the most isolated" of her life, and found herself asking as she listened to the Navajos singing "Why do we try to thrust our civilization on a people like this?" Her conclusions are the better worth recording because the Faunces were not missionaries or uplifters, but traders to the Indians; traders whose integrity the Indians came to respect, whose friendship stood by them in sickness and helped them in disaster, but sober and hard-headed enough to see these Indians realistically as well as sympathetically. "Desert Wife" is the fine story of this experience, a beautiful and revealing book. MARTHA GRUENING.

Books in Brief

The Concise Oxford French Dictionary, compiled by Abel and Marguerite Chevalley. New York: The Oxford University Press. 926 pages. $3.

THE REFERENCE books published by the Oxford University Press are bound in dark blue cloth with an abundance of gold stamping on the back. This may seem a frivolous reason for liking them, but reference books have to be looked at as well as used, and some of them are of a plainness or cheapness that is painful to the eyes. Fortunately most of those in the Oxford series are as good inside as out. This French-English dictionary, containing about 40,000 words and a great number of idiomatic phrases, is one of the best. It is published at a lucky time. Most of the other French-English dictionaries were none before the War. Since then, both languages have changed along with the life they express, and whole new vocabularies have been invented to describe airplanes, automobiles, the Freudian subconscious and other technological inventions. The Chevalleys include many of these new words, and they also give a great deal of space to colloquial French, slang and all, though they have tried to confine themselves to the slang words that promise to have a long life. In general their aim has been, not to define French words in English, but rather to find equivalents for them that will have the same emotional impact on the English reader. One of their greatest achievements is to avoid the sort of howlers made by their predecessors, one of whom—and this is a typical example—defined *eau de vaisselle* (dish water) as "a thin broth." M. C.

An Atlas of Current Events, by J. F. Horrabin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 163 pages, 74 maps. $1.50.

Mr. Horrabin's neat little maps show the various sections of the world as well packed containers of high explosives. Here, clearly and graphically documented, are the ingredients of pending trouble for all who wish to read: contested lands and resources, racial problems and seats of fanatic nationalism—many of the contestants within easy shooting range, but all with interests too far-flung and involved to leave any hope of local solution. Pieced together, the maps show why some nations want to risk war, and others not. Since nationalism has not yet been abolished, the division of resources among the countries is pretty lopsided; as among individuals, there are the possessors and the dispossessed. Mr. Horrabin's publishers advise that the Atlas be kept constantly at hand while reading the papers; however, it would also be well to read the news carefully for further light on why the maps show what they do. All in all, this Atlas is a compact, well docketed source of much information, from which the observant reader can readily learn much more than is pointed out in the written text. Aside from its other uses, it might be highly recommended as a supplementaary and handy visual-education course in world politics for our schools. B. E. B.

America's Young Men, edited by Durward Howe. Los Angeles: Richard Blank Publishing Company. 725 pages. $12.50.

This is a book of concise biographical material about more than 5,000 American men who are under forty but have already won prominence in industry, the professions, government service, the arts and the law—in brief, a junior Who's Who. B. E. B.

Tariff Retaliation: Repercussions of the Hawley-Smoot Bill, by Joseph M. Jones, Jr. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press. 352 pages. $3.

This book is more important than its title suggests. It is one of those studies that have to be made before America can make a choice among three courses open to her: internationalism, economic nationalism, or a planned economy that lies between the other two. Indeed, the Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Wallace, who first formulated these choices, submits a brief foreword. Mr. Jones's belief that the unconditional most-favored-nation clause was undermined by the Tariff Act of 1930 is less significant than his assertion that exceptions to this clause must become more numerous in the future. The New Dealers may possibly in their experimental way be induced to follow Wallace more and Warren less. Further reciprocal agreements like that with Cuba are possible. Although no one should con-

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tend that the fall elections are tariff-policy referenda, there may be a more liberal use of the executive freedom permitted by the Tariff Act of 1934, now that the President's hands have been upheld. Of course, Mr. Jones may be wrong in some of his examples of tariff retaliation. It may have been a coincidence that Italy switched her imports, and that Canada raised her tariffs on American goods. But there have been too many of these coincidences. R. R.

Saroyanesque

IN THE days of my Youth I possessed a slide trombone which I dearly loved.

"The Strings of My Heart" I used to call my slide trombone. You who are older than I and infinitely wiser will say I was a fool because I did not consider that a slide trombone had no strings. You do not understand that it was because I was impetuous. I will explain. Yet it is all very subtle and I feel perhaps I am wasting my time.

Oh, I was young then, very young and very eager. My father had just come over from Greece. My father has a story too but first I want to tell you the simple tale of my slide trombone. In Greece, confidentially, my father was the president of a bank; while here in your country he is only the man who dusts the chair before the president of the bank sits down. Yet he does not complain. He is like me, my father. Just folks.

Once passing a mirror I peered into it. Looking at me I saw me. A sadness welled up within me.

Now I must tell you about my slide trombone.

Like the Young of Woman in my land I was born with a hot love for Things. You will perceive how quickly and beautifully I strike the universal note. That is because I am different from you and the people of your cold northern race. You are old and shriveled by the bitter fires of Life. I am young, as was my father before me at my age.

Have I told you about my father yet? I must. With a faraway look in his good eye my father often thinks of the Old Country. As he pushes his broom along the pavement, he sighs. In Sicily he was a prosperous mendicant. Still he is an humble man, my father. We are an humble race. Humble but proud.

I can hold back no longer. I am full to bursting about my slide trombone and I must tell you the whole strange story. But in a simple way so that I can be sure you will understand it. I am a simple fellow in an humble eager youthful sort of way.

It was yesterday.

Youth's curious pleasures had passed and left me cold. An urge seized me. I felt a spasmic desire to clutch the stars in their sockets and draw them to me—zung! And then hanging from a discarded hatrack in the attic I found a slide trombone and my warm southern heart was full to bursting.

You will laugh but if you knew you would not laugh. Perhaps you would cry instead, great bitter tears.

Who can know?

Even now there may be someone crying. When I think how my simple narrative is making someone cry, I cry too great bitter tears. I am like that. Sensitive. And young too, do not forget.

My father who is no longer young is sad as he daily delivers letters to your door. Never would you guess it but once far across the Pacific he was a merry Geisha girl.

I took my slide trombone to a music teacher. I set it tenderly before him. The Strings of My Heart! An

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The Secretary of Agriculture discusses at length Charles A. Beard's new book "The Open Door at Home," hoping to start widespread discussion of the fundamental changes in national policy he proposes.

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intensity crept over me. "What do you want?" said the music teacher. "This slide trombone," I said, "I want to learn to play it."

"Why?" he said simply. "Why not?" I asked simply. He handled it with great rough fingers. Then he looked at me with sad gray eyes. "The slide is missing."

This is the end, I reflected. I am like my father who was once the Emperor of Ethiopia. Bitter.

I must tell you this. It is important. Above the music teacher's head a clock ticked. Tick, tick, tick—tick. Sometimes tick-tick, tick-tick. Inexorably, interminably. Like that. Ah well. EDMUND BELOIN.

A Correction

Miss Josephine Johnson, whose poem, "The Heart of Man," appeared in The New Republic of December 19, was incorrectly credited with the novel, "Now in November." There are two Josephine Johnsons, the novelist usually signing her name with the middle initial W.—THE EDITORS.

Contributors

PHILIPPE SOUPAULT, the well known French poet, novelist and publicist, is now lecturing in the United States and gathering material for a series of articles about this country.

CHARLES A. BEARD's most recent book is "The Open Door at Home," published last month by Macmillan.

T. R. CARSKADON is a New York writer who has had professional experience in radio broadcasting.

HENRY PRATT FAIRCHILD, head of the Department of Sociology at New York University, is the author of "General Sociology" and is now working on a yearbook based on journalistic materials.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER is a poet and novelist whose latest book of poems, "Comrade Mister," has just been published by The Equinox Press.

MARTHA GRUENING contributes articles and reviews to numerous magazines.

EDMUND BELOIN, according to his own statement, is a daring young man from Stratford, Connecticut.

The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of Malcolm Cowley, Beatrice E. Bettinger and Robert Rockafellow.

SEVEN SOUTHERN POETS

JOHN PEALE BISHOP writes that his Southern credentials are slightly dubious because he was born in Charlestown, West Virginia. He is the author, among other books, of "Now with His Love" (verse) and "Many Thousands Gone." His new novel, "Act of Darkness," is to be published by Scribner's.

RANDALL JARRELL is now majoring in Psychology at Vanderbilt University. He was born in Nashville but spent most of his childhood in California. Some of his poems have appeared in The American Review.

MANSON RADFORD is a Kentuckian who was educated at the University of Pennsylvania, the Naval Academy and at Swarthmore. He now lives in New Orleans, where he is devoting all his time to writing.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM holds a professorship of English at Vanderbilt University and contributes poems and critical articles to various magazines. He is the author of a book of poems, "Chills and Fever," and "God Without Thunder: An Unorthodox Defense of Orthodoxy."

ALLEN TATE is the author of two books of poetry, "Mr. Pope and Other Poems" and "Poems: 1928-1931," and of biographies of Stonewall Jackson and Jefferson Davis. He is now teaching at Southwestern University in Memphis.

ROBERT PENN WARREN, author of "John Brown: The Making of a Martyr" and a book of poems, "Kentucky Mountain Farm," is now living in Louisiana.

KATHRYN WORTH lives in Nashville, where her husband is a professor of English at Vanderbilt University. Her poems have appeared in The Atlantic Monthly, Harpers, Poetry and elsewhere.

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